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# WIDE AWAKE

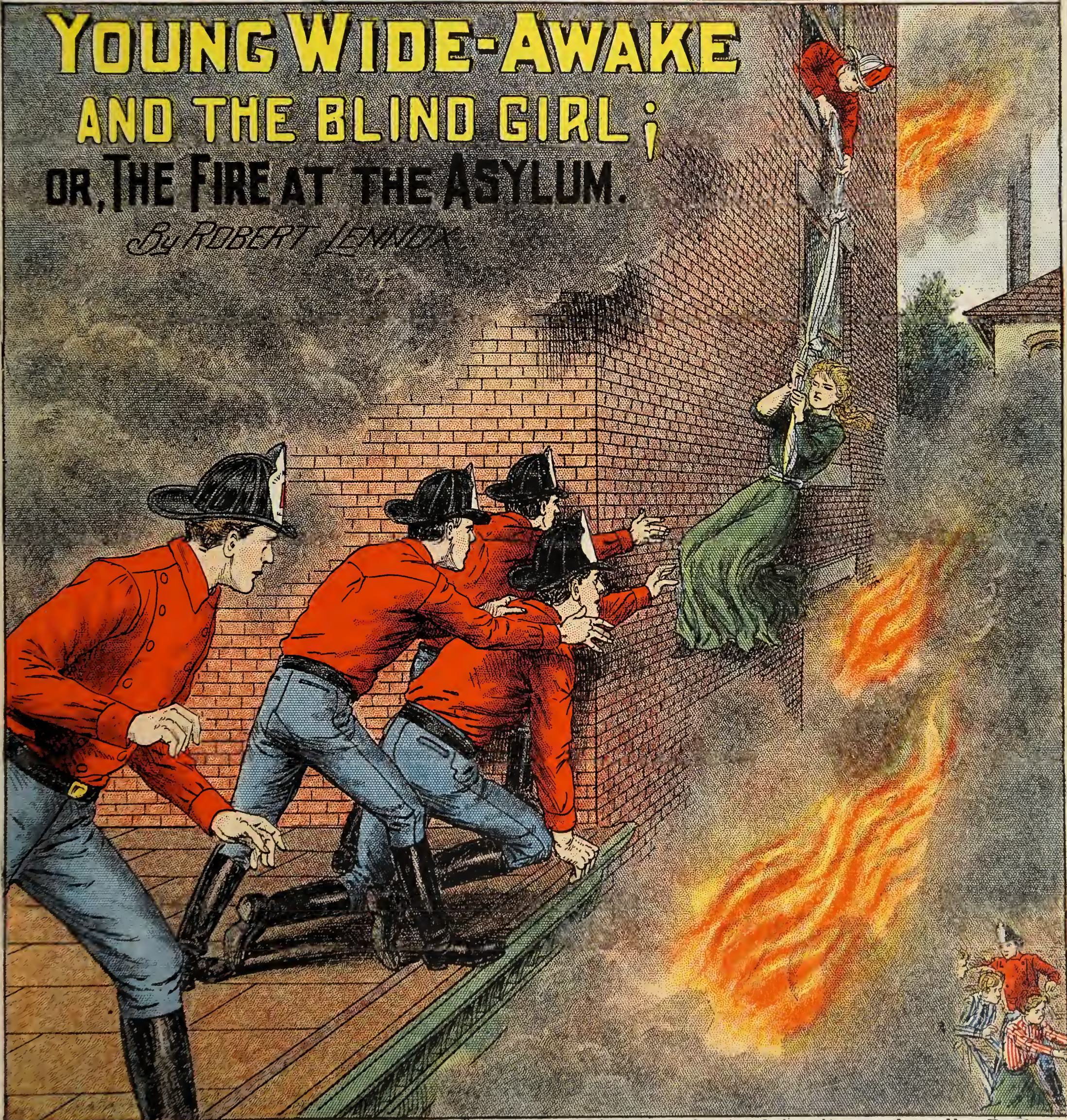
A COMPLETE  
STORY

# WEEKLY.

EVERY  
WEEK.

## YOUNG WIDE-AWAKE AND THE BLIND GIRL; OR, THE FIRE AT THE ASYLUM.

By ROBERT JENNIX.



Wide swung the girl toward the low roof, the rope of knotted sheets doing its work well. Back she swung above the cloud of smoke and the leaping flames, then forward toward the eager hands of the courageous boys who waited there.







# WIDE AWAKE WEEKLY

**A COMPLETE STORY EVERY WEEK.**

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## Young Wide Awake and the Blind Girl

OR,

### THE FIRE AT THE ASYLUM

By ROBERT LENNOX

#### CHAPTER I.

##### KITTY BRIBES HER FATHER.

"It is too bad about Lucy, isn't it?" asked Kitty, of Faith, as the two girls sat in the library one afternoon in spring or, rather, late winter, but a balmy day for that, discussing the condition of one of their friends, Lucy Creagh.

"It came upon her so suddenly, too, and the doctor, even, was not aware of the danger," answered Faith. "I was speaking with her mother this afternoon, and they seem to have despaired entirely of her ever being cured."

"It frightened me when I heard that she had really become blind," said Kitty, "for just at that time I was having trouble with my eye. Don't you remember how much I suffered with that peculiar feeling like a red-hot iron in my eye? I didn't think much of it until the past week, when I heard that Lucy was really and truly blind. Lucy was such a sweet girl, too."

"You know it was a cataract which formed across her eyes. It came across both of them, and the doctor only used some sort of eye-water to stop the formation. I have heard that he could have stopped it all by having her undergo an operation. They say that the cataract could have been stopped and that she would not have suffered much pain, either." Faith had been around among several of the friends of Lucy, who was dearer to her even than to Kitty, for they had been seat-mates at school together.

"And they have sent her to the asylum. That seems awful. Just to think of it—being locked up there with a lot of poor blind people, some of them never having seen the light of day. And Lucy always enjoyed everything about nature, too. She just had a fondness for that sort of thing, and it was so irksome to the rest of us. She used to get away up in her grades and we used to get nothing," continued Kitty."

"You talk like such an old woman, Kit. It was only a few months ago that you were studying those things," protested Faith.

"Well, a few months is long enough. Haven't I grown a few years older in those few months? Do you suppose I am going to stay young always?"

"No, but the idea of your talking about 'used to be' just as if it was years and years ago. But, Lucy will not stop her studies. That's the reason I think it was fine that they put her in the asylum. The specialists and all the friends have despaired of ever saving her sight, so the best thing she can do is to learn the way of reading the blind books so that she can just keep right on. I have read in the magazines that they have all kinds of books for the blind. And they can go right on learning."

"But just think what she misses and how keenly she will remember all that she has seen and how more keenly she will miss all the things which she knows are going on and that she cannot see. Goodness! it's sad to think of anyone's being blind."



"Yes," said Faith, "and when it's such a sweet girl as Lucy. She was the dearest little thing. I just loved her ever so much; she always helped me out in my classes, and she was so good at drawing. I wonder what she will do now that she can't go on with her pen and ink?"

"I don't know. But, you know it won't stop her playing. She can stay with her piano all right. She'll have to learn by note, of course, but they say that a blind person's hearing gets to be awfully good, and, you know, Lucy always was good at picking out airs on the piano. She used to come home from the theater and play half the things she heard. Don't you remember how she used to play everything after the band concerts on Main Street? She could always play all their new music at the next dance or party."

"I wonder if it will make her playing any sadder. You know they say that a blind person's music is always the expression of their own selves, and I know Lucy will be saddened by her blindness."

"I don't know about that," argued Kitty. "She was always so light-hearted that I doubt if she will let this affliction weigh much on her mind. I know I am going to call on her on visitor's day every time I get a chance. If I can do anything toward keeping her in her old jolly way I am going to do it, because it would be a shame to let her get sad."

"I'll tell you what we can do: let's get Terry and Dick to go over with us some of these days, and all four of us can make a call on her. She would be tickled to death," said Faith.

"Oh, Faith, that would be fine! I wonder if the boys would go. Oh, of course, they would! Dick, I know, would go with us."

"And I know Terry would go. He would do anything for Lucy, if we only asked him." Faith was in for protecting the interests of her sweetheart.

"That's what we'll do. We'll get the doctor to tell us how we shall do and then we'll call on her and tell her everything that is going on. She would be delighted to hear all about what the girls and the boys are doing. That's just the finest kind of an idea!"

"And you can play all the very latest music," went on Faith, "and she can pick it up. Her ear is so good she will catch right on."

"That's right. I'll just get some of the latest music this evening, when we drive to town, and I'll practice it all up so that I can play it without the music. She'll be glad to hear it."

Lucy was one of the chief girl friends, at school, of these two chums, and many a time she had been among the little parties that had gone out for days in the woods or had taken evening rides in hayricks or in bobsleds. She was not an especial favorite with the boys, principally because she was too keen of wit for them, and they did not like to be defeated when they tried any of their jokes or stories on her. It had been several months since first the cataract had started in her eyes, but the affliction had grown rapidly, and the doctors had been unable to stop it. Her parents, after

consulting with specialists on the eyes, determined that it would be best to send the girl to an institution where her eyes could be treated. Thus it was arranged and since one of the best institutions for the blind was here in Belmont, a place which had grown famous for its educational facilities for the blind, it was determined that Lucy should be entered here.

"There come the boys, now!" cried Kitty, as she spied two familiar forms alighting from the car, and guessed who they were.

"We'll ask them first thing if they will go over to the asylum with us. They'll go, I know," said Faith, this subject uppermost in her mind.

The question was put to the boys immediately upon their arrival, and it was decided that on the coming Saturday afternoon they should all four go out driving to the institution and should spend the greater part of the afternoon as guests of the institution and the entertainers of their girl friend.

"Speaking of going out there, do you know, I have often wondered what an awful thing it would be for fire to break out in that place," said Dick. "Have you ever thought of the fact that they have no brick buildings? All their places are frame, and surely they ought to have more durable material. If a fire were to break out in that place there would be a panic immediately, and the result would be worse than the damage caused by fire. That is always the result of panics. People break their necks trying to get out of danger, and they get into danger that is far worse. Just to think of a lot of blind people trying to escape from a building where there is fire!"

"Dick, don't mention such a thing! Wouldn't it be horrible?" Kitty shuddered at the very idea. And she was not willing that it be discussed.

"But, Oi suppose they have them trained for just such things," interrupted Terry. "Oi don't know anything about it and Oi haven't thought anything about it, but it stroikes me thot they would plan for foires and all thot sort of thing. Oi know Oi would think of it first."

"But you have been fighting fire for so long that you don't think of anything else," laughed Faith. "You boys think there is nothing else in all the world to do but to have fires. They never have one out there, and I suppose they take precautions against fires. They do not become careless like the rest of us. They train the girls to get out of such troubles."

"That's what I do not know," said Wide. "Maybe they train the girls to get out of those buildings, and maybe they don't. And, perhaps, after they have done all their training, it will avail them nothing when the final test comes. Of course, if they put them through a course of training, and then suddenly ring the fire alarms just as if there were a blaze and watch the progress of the training, it would be different. But I doubt if they waste any time at that practice."

"Well, anyway, we're going out to see Lucy, and we'll make her see some of the bright side of life," said Kitty.



"You boys must tune yourselves up to the merry pitch, for you'll have to come to our aid when we get worn out."

"You surely don't think Lucy is losing any of her happy nature, do you?" asked Wide, in some surprise.

"She might have lost some of it. You would lose some of yours if you were suddenly made blind, wouldn't you?"

"I guess you're right. We'll do our best, at any rate, to make her happy," and with this the conversation drifted to other topics. The coming of spring, despite the fact that the weather was cold and drear, and there was presage of a snow, attracted them to talk of the spring-time days. If snow fell it would probably be the last of the winter season, and spring would break upon them with all its cheeriness and hearty good-nature.

After a short while the couples drifted apart, Wide and Kitty having possession of one room, while Faith and Terry found the cozy-corner in the music-room just to their liking. It is a peculiar thing, when one recalls it, that Terry and Faith always drifted away to this cozy-corner. And it was just as peculiar that Kitty and Dick found one corner of the library so to their liking.

"If we only had some way of being chaperoned," said Kitty, and there was a tone of regret as she spoke. "I want to see Sothern, and I want to see him in 'If I Were King.' They say he is just fine in that play, and I have never seen him in anything."

"It would be a great trip, too, for we could get there just before the curtain goes up, and the schedule of the trains is such that we could leave Lincoln right after the curtain on the last act. There is a large party going, for I heard several of the older fellows discussing it in Copeland's this afternoon," said Wide.

They had fallen to discussing various plans for the future, and one idea which occurred to Wide was that of going over to Lincoln to see the famous actor in his still more famous play. Dick was a lover of the theater—that is, the better productions—and so was Kitty. The same might be said of Terry and Faith. All four liked to attend the better class of plays, and they had merry times discussing the plays from their various points of view on the next day, or whenever they met again.

It so happened that a party was being made up in Belmont for the purpose of going to Lincoln to see the actor, and this was the party which this couple wished to join. But there was the matter of a chaperone, for Kitty knew that she could not attend without having some older person with them. She was not old enough to be going around with an escort only, and her father, trusting Dick even as he did, was not proposing to allow his daughter to go around without the older escort.

They called Terry and Faith into the room to tell them of the scheme, and to ask for their advice in the matter. Terry listened quietly, waiting for the young lady to express her opinion first. This Faith did in a very few words:

"That's fine! But the chaperone! I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll ask your father, Kit! He'll be glad to go along with us. That's the idea!"

"And mamma will be tickled to death!" cried Kitty. "That's the idea! We'll go right now and find them!"

Just then Mr. and Mrs. Lester came into the library.

"What's all this I hear about your coming to see us? Has one of you proposed to these young men, or to one young man, and been accepted? Then we're not the ones to see. You must go and ask their mothers!"

Mr. Lester was in his usually jolly mood, and made out that he misunderstood the mission upon which the young people were just about to launch themselves.

"Papa, we've just discovered a fine way for you to give mamma a treat!" exclaimed Kitty, joyously. "We want you and mamma to go over to Lincoln to see Sothern in 'If I Were King,' and it's going to be there this week. Won't that be a fine trip for you?"

"And I suppose we are to take care of you young people," laughed Mrs. Lester, as she caught the drift of the kind suggestion of Kitty.

"Of course, we want you to join us. We were thinking of going over there to see Sothern, and we think it would be a fine idea for papa to take you there to see him, too. Don't you think it would be nice?"

"The finest ever, darling," said Mr. John Lester, "and your mother is beaming with joy at the idea. We'll just let you people take us over to Lincoln and show us how to see a really good play."

"You're the dearest old dad!" said Kitty, as she reached up and kissed him, "and mamma will give you another after you leave the room."

"That's bribery, young lady," he laughed at her, "but we'll excuse you this time on the plea of ignorance of the law."

## CHAPTER II.

### FIRE IN THE BUSINESS SECTION.

It was a merry, merry crowd which gathered at the depot that Thursday night for the trip to Lincoln to see Sothern in his masterpiece.

"There's Fred Parsons and Gerald Keating!" exclaimed Kitty, in an undertone, pointing up the platform to where these two Neptunes stood in the glare of one of the depot lights, looking over the crowd which was rapidly filling the platform, but apart from all the rest.

"I suppose they, too, are going to Lincoln," suggested Dick, looking that way, and noting that they were dressed a little too well for just an evening on the streets of Belmont.

"And they are not taking any one with them. I wonder how they can enjoy themselves alone," commented Faith, who was standing by with Terry at her side, while just a short distance away were Mr. and Mrs. John Lester.

"That's very conceited, don't you think?" smiled Dick. "You might have left that for one of us to say, Terry or myself. Don't you think a couple of boys may enjoy themselves without being with girls all the time?"

"Oh, yes, in a way," and Faith spoke with a hauteur



which she could command excellently at times. "I suppose they have a sort of good time, something like a game of solitaire. If they didn't have a better time in the company of girls why would they always be seeking out girls to be with?"

"Humph! That does sound delightfully conceited," said Dick, as he drew a little more closely to the party, ready for a short, sharp argument. "You seem to look on the boys being with the girls as the desire of the boys to be with the girls. You are entirely wrong. The boys are not so extremely anxious, always, while the girls usually are."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Kitty, now entering this argument. "You think we cannot do without you, eh? You think you are the lords of creation, and that we must have you with us for protection or pleasure all the time?"

"I did not say you must have us with you. I said you wish to have us with you," continued Young Wide Awake.

"Don't you think we could enjoy the play just as much to-night without you as with you?" she asked.

"That's precisely the point. If you could, you wouldn't have suggested our going and you wouldn't have thought it so fine a thing. You would have gone over there with your mother and father and would never have said a word to us," answered Dick.

"Is that so?" she answered in question, turning slightly away from Dick as if to show him that she was not entirely dependent upon him for enjoyment.

"But you must see the other side of the matter," said Dick, and Kitty turned back to him, raising her brows in haughty interrogation. "We boys may find just as much pleasure away from the girls, but when the girls want us, all they have to do is to make the sign and we come. We are drawn to them just the same as a piece of iron is drawn to the magnet when the professor turns on the current. You know how they show that experiment in the physics classes?"

"I am not going to forgive you for that kind of an explanation. It is too weak, and I'm not going to accept it."

"Very well, dearie," and he drew very close, as he spoke to her, "but you notice how quickly we come at your word, don't you? Draw your own conclusions from that. Do I ever hesitate when you lift your eyes and beckon with them for me to join you?"

Kitty smiled up at him prettily, and Dick knew he was forgiven.

Terry and Faith had not entered into the spirit of this little tilt, nor did they hear the way it ended. They had turned away for the moment to watch the incoming headlight.

"Here's the train!" was the cry in every part of the station, and the jolly crowd moved forward in a grand surge to make their way aboard the cars, each fearful that he would lose the best seat if he were not on the steps first.

"Come on!" cried Young Wide Awake, as he reached Kitty's arm and pulled her toward the tracks. "We must get two seats together, for there won't be such a jolly good time unless the four of us are near!"

In the rush for the train, Terry and Faith became separated from the others, and there was a scramble through the train to get together after all were aboard. After some maneuvering the two couples found themselves in a double seat, facing each other, and they were happy.

"Lincoln! Lincoln!" cried out the brakeman, and a great buzz and stir passed through the cars as the crowd made ready for leaving the train, the girls straightening their hair and hats, the young men seeing that their overcoats were brushed and that their hats were sitting firmly on their heads. It was to be another rush from the train, as it had been to get aboard.

It was rather late that night when the party started for Belmont. All those who had attended the play had enjoyed it, and though the crowd was rather weary of the wait, for the train was late that evening, they still held their good spirits, and laughed and joked as they stood about the platform in Lincoln, many of them munching sandwiches, others partaking of sweeter food, while all nervously paced the depot in their anxiety to be on their way.

"The staginess of that fellow Villon reminds me of a certain good friend of mine in the fire department," laughed a voice just in front of the quartette, and Dick looked a little more closely to see if his mental guess was correct. The lights in the coach were not of the best, and the party had been paying little attention to who were taking the various seats in the car. Just in front of Wide, Kitty, Faith and Terry sat a couple of boys, and from one of these came the remark.

Dick leaned a little from his position so that he could command a view of the fellow's face. It was Fred Parsons, of course; the other was Gerald Keating.

"Who did he mean?" asked Kitty, leaning very close to Wide.

"Do you mean that for a question or the answer?" asked Wide, himself leaning more closely toward Kitty.

"I suppose it is both," she smiled up at him.

"I wish there was someone in our fire department who had the common sense that Villon had," he said.

"What do you mean? Do you think he was a real hero?" asked the other voice, that of Keating, and the sound of the words easily traveled back to the quartette, just as was intended.

"Well, he made a fool of himself over that woman. That's what I mean. You know we have a fellow in the fire department who is doing the same thing!" spoke Parsons, his voice being raised high enough to be heard by many more than our little party.

"For which he is very glad!" muttered Wide to Kitty.

"Oh, then you think you are making a fool of yourself over me?" asked Kitty, quickly, looking at him reproachfully.

"I didn't say I thought so—that was Parsons. It doesn't matter what I'm making of myself over you, I am glad of it."

Kitty's hand was in Dick's, and it was well out of sight, so that no one but Dick and Kitty knew what a delightful



little pressure there was to Kitty's hand when he said this.

"He makes a fool of himself just as often as he finds the chance. Villon didn't do that!" laughed Keating, the voice still being raised.

"But Villon played to the galleries all the time, and that's what our friend in the fire department does," answered Parsons.

"And the galleries clap and holler just as if he had done something that was worth the while," kept on Keating, growing more bold.

"But the good people in the orchestra downstairs, the people who really have the sense to see things and understand them, don't clap and holler."

"Of course not. But that doesn't keep our friend from going right on and making a fool of himself."

"I guess I had better close that up," muttered Dick, leaning over to Kitty, and a moment later he was out of his seat and had stepped forward. Reaching the aisle, and stepping to a position where he could lean over and speak to Keating and Parsons without his words being heard, he said:

"Parsons, I am tired of hearing all this. If I were alone I wouldn't care. But there are young ladies here, and your words are an insult to them as well as to me. If you say another word which in any way reflects on me or any of those with me, I shall punch your face a little better than I ever did before. Keating, that is intended for you, too. Shut your heads, or I'll take the first chance I find to lick both of you. You know what I mean!"

That was sufficient. He had spoken so that no others heard. Parsons started to make a retort, but Wide's look at him was enough to quiet him at once. Keating, as Keating always did, kept discreetly still. He never had anything to say when a better man was ready to show him with his fists.

There were no more voices raised to concert pitch, there were no more rough sentences uttered during the trip. Parsons had taken the cue from Wide's words and was showing that he could be discreet if he desired.

"That looks like a fire across the river!" cried Kitty, as she looked out of the window, and saw the reflection of light in the sky.

"Where?" cried the other three, as they pushed to the window and peered into the blackness of the early morning to see the cause for Kitty's words.

"That's a fire, all right!" said Dick, his anxiety now rising, for he wished to be there, the fireman instinct uppermost.

"Belmont! Bel-mont!" came the roar of the brakeman's voice above the noise of the onrushing train.

"We're at the bridge in Norwich," said Kitty, "and we'll soon be on the other side. It looks like it is in the north part of town."

"But we can't tell whereabouts. It might be far out and it may be close to town. I wonder!" said Wide, as he again peered anxiously into the night, straining his eyes

past Kitty, shading them from the car-light with his hands, while he tried to figure the distance.

By this time the people on the same side of the car had noticed the reflection, and the word went about that a big fire was raging in Belmont. Those in the car, and the car was packed, were brought to a tense strain of excitement. They were now wide awake. Many had dropped into a light doze after the train left Lincoln, especially those who had no company, but they were quickly and definitely awakened by the excitement of the moment. A fire causes the thrill to travel through the weariest body, the thrill which knows nothing of physical weariness, which arouses any and all to the occasion, ready to at least run miles to the scene. At this time of the night, when the sky was dark and cloudy, the scene was one of canniness, even though fire flames leaping into a darkened sky were glorious in their many hues.

The train slowed down as it crossed the bridge, turned into the street toward the depot, and ran in quickly, the engineer seeming to divine the feelings of those whom he was hauling, seeming to understand that they were anxious to be off the cars and on the run toward the fire. All the whistles and bells of Belmont were turned loose. No one had paid heed to them while they were crossing the bridge, for their attention was through the medium of the eyes—on the reflection of the flames. Now they heard the din and noise of the steam blowing through the sirens, as they hustled and bustled through the aisles, onto the platforms of the cars and leaped off into the depot. The crowd did not linger long. There was excitement in the air, and the depot was as soon emptied of its human freight as it was filled.

"Come on! We must see where it is!" cried Dick, as he grabbed Kitty tightly by the arm and hurried her through the depot railings to the street. In a moment he had entered a nearby drug-store, used the 'phone and hurried back to join the others. Mr. and Mrs. Lester had by this time found their charges and were waiting for the coming of Wide with his news. The rest of the Lincoln playgoers were hurrying up the street toward Main, not knowing how far or where was the fire—simply rushing toward the reflection in the sky toward the north.

"The Pythian Castle, on Main Street!" cried Dick, as he rushed out of the door. "It just started a few minutes ago!"

With this the sextette started at a rapid pace for Main Street. The crowd which had gone ahead was right! They had asked no questions, and had gone straight to the fire! It was squarely in Washington territory!

"You go on, and we'll follow," suggested Kitty to Wide, and, excusing themselves hastily, the boys broke away and made a dash for the Holmes Street house. It required the shortest space of time for them to don their firemen's uniforms and to make their way to the fire, which was but three blocks away from the engine-house.

"Captain Halstead!" called Chief Pelton, as he spied the two boys running across the street toward the Washington



engine. Joining them in a moment, he gave his orders rapidly:

"Your hose-line is already stretched! Norton is in the lead, and he's fighting all right! Go upstairs and take charge!"

"Your axe and pike, Terry!" called Wide to his Irish chum, and with this he darted for the hallway of the Pythian Castle. Taking the steps two at a time he found his boys in a bad position.

"Out of here, quick, Hal!" he cried, through his trumpet, not being able to get along the hallway to the place where his boys were fighting. "We'll go up by the ladder!" Quickly the boys fell back, the hose was withdrawn, and a moment or two after found them on the street, making their way to the rear of the castle. The entire rear end of the place was ablaze, this having cast the reflection toward the river which those on the train had seen.

"The stream! Hit her square!" he called, and immediately the response came in the swish and wash of water against the brick walls of the rear of the place. The building next to the castle was also afire, and yet the chief had so much confidence in the Washington company that he had not called out the others! Dick could not understand! It appeared that the first move would have been to throw as much force against this blaze as possible, since it was in the downtown section, and a part of the section which was most thickly settled with business buildings!

"Looks like it had a fine start!" he muttered, half to himself, as he watched the boys pouring the water straight at the walls. "All those window-cases are gone and the flooring is already exposed from the heat of the fire. The brick is softening and crumbling. That fire's been burning a long time!" The chief was standing close, nervously watching the company, and overheard the words of Dick.

"It does look like it had a fine start! Look! Starting on the next building! There's oil and gasoline in there!" cried the chief, pointing at the spread of the flames to the Belmont Hardware Company's building.

"Call out the Neptunes, chief! This is going to be a hard fight!"

Just as if the elements understood what Dick had said in presage, or possibly Dick had gathered something from the lowering clouds which were settling over the city, a fresh wind blew in from the river, fanning the flames, the sparks leaping high and blowing upward to the top of the surrounding buildings.

The chief darted away to turn in the second alarm.

"Terry, bring the ladders! We've got to do something up there!"

With a rush the ladders were brought and Dick supervised the placing against the rear wall of the hardware store. The fire was already making its way through the windows, the iron shutters not having been closed.

"I'll go up, and then send up the hose. We'll have to take all the chances!" cried Dick, as he moved the ladder to a firmer position, tried it with his weight, and started upward.

The crowd from the street had surged to the rear, and the alley was well filled, as he started upward.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE MANLINESS OF PARSONS.

"Send up the hose!" he called, and quickly it was passed upward, four of the Washingtons, Hal, Joe, Terry and Ted handling the lead. Ted and Dick held the nozzle, called for the stream, and the fight was on in reality.

"That's the way!" roared someone in the crowd, and the cry was immediately taken up. The people saw the effect which the daring move was having on the flames. They were fighting on a level with the fire.

"Keep it straight, Ted! That's the way! Hold that nozzle while I go down and take a look! Terry, get up here to the nozzle!" And then Dick clambered lightly, agilely, down the ladder, taking the under side so that Terry could come above and also that he might pass the others who were supporting the lead of hose.

"We're hitting the right spot, chief, eh?" he asked, as he met the chief at the foot of the ladder. "It's a dangerous piece of work, though, and the fellows are liable to fall any time!"

"You shouldn't have tried that, Halstead. It's too risky!"

"It had to be done. There was no other way to get at the blaze!" he answered as he swung out into the street quickly and glanced upward to watch the progress of the fight. The flames in the rear of the castle building had eaten their way below the second story and were making havoc in the rear of the grocery store which was located on the ground floor.

"I wonder if there's any oil in this place!" he called to the chief.

"Three barrels!" called a voice from the crowd, and the owner of the store rushed forward.

"Three barrels of oil?" yelled Wide, anxiously.

"Yes, sir. They came in this afternoon, and the tank has just been filled!"

"Get your boys out of there quickly!" screamed the chief, as he heard the grocer tell what he had in the store. "They're above a regular volcano!"

"Down the ladder, fellows! There's oil over here!" and quickly the four on the ladder lowered themselves from their position of hazard.

Dick had taken a heavy chance in this movement, and he recognized now that it would be all that both companies could do to get this fire under control. He had sent a stream against the wall of the castle, having placed his ladder squarely over the oil and gasoline in the hardware store, into which the sparks from the second floor were dropping like so much rain.

"Keep your distance and fight at the floor!" he called, then running out of the alley, taking the grocer with him. Around the corner he went, telling the man to get his keys.

"I'm not going in there, sir!" cried the grocer.



"But I am! That oil's got to be moved. We've got to fight this fire out and we're going to do it!"

Opening the door so that he could enter, the grocer stepped back and allowed Wide to go inside. On the run Dick dashed down the long aisle, the store lighted brilliantly from the rear end by the flames which had eaten through the floor, and he saw the sparks dropping on several barrels which had been rolled into the place. Trot followed close behind, though Dick paid no heed to what was coming into the place behind him.

Flash! Puff! He was too late! The dropping sparks had gotten into the open-topped tank of coal-oil, and the entire tank was ablaze. Of course, there was no explosion, because the oil was not confined, but the fire leaped upward in a perfect fury, igniting the stock of brooms which was packed on shelves above the oil tank. Dick halted and watched the fire for a moment, standing only a few yards away from the raging flames.

"Terry! Terry!" he called, through his trumpet, hoping that his voice would carry to the boy in the rear.

"All roight!" came the response.

"Come around to the front and bring your axe! Come into the grocery!"

There was little time lost. By the time Dick could locate the things which he needed, Terry came dashing along the aisle of the store.

"That tank just caught. We'll have to stop the blaze by smothering! Grab a bunch of those sacks and we'll throw them into the tank!"

Right heartily the boys lifted the small piles of sacks which had been carefully folded and stored on a counter to the side. Standing as closely as they dared to the oil tank, watching the sparks dropping about the barrels of oil, they tossed the sacks at the tank, unerringly, and the two piles fell squarely into the opening. For a moment the fire died, then began creeping out on the sides of the sacks.

"If we don't do it this time, she's liable to go," muttered Wide, as he picked up another pile of the sacks, Terry doing likewise, and walked quickly to a good position, this time daring to go closer, even though the sparks from above were dropping on their shoulders as they worked.

"Heave!" and both piles went straight at the tank. But the shot was poorly made! Instead of falling on top of those which they had just hurled at the tank of blazing oil, this pile knocked the first ones from the tank, and the blaze leaped up anew, released from its bondage!

"Bad luck! We'll try again!" And again they gathered the piles of sacks together, this time taking the last of the bunch, and started for the blaze. The flames had reached out and taken the brooms captive this time, the straw above the oil tank igniting readily and spreading the fire quickly along the shelf.

"Look out! There goes the floor!" came the sound from the outside, and Dick and Terry retreated quickly, thinking it was this floor which was going.

Crash! Rip! Crash! came the sounds of falling and

ripping timbers, and one piece of the wall to the right caved in, the flooring above bending under the strain.

"A close call, Terry! That corner above us is about to go!"

"Look out for the gasoline!" came a dozen voices from the outside, yelling with their might, and the two boys understood. Quick as a flash they turned on their heels, knowing that the barrels of gasoline in the hardware store next door were in danger.

Boom! Crash! Boom! Crash!

The noise was deafening. Round and about the two boys the timbers of the ceilings and the sidewalls settled and crashed, ripping their way through each other, tearing and smashing as they were rent asunder by the force of the explosion. The shock threw the boys from their feet, and as he fell Dick had the presence of mind to crawl between two counters, above which it happened some heavy planking had been placed in order to connect the two counters, giving more counter room.

"Young Wide Awake and Terry are on the inside!" screamed the chief, remembering that both boys had a few moments previously gone into the store to fight the flames from that side, or to investigate.

"Young Wide Awake beneath those walls!" quickly went the word about the crowd, and the people unconsciously surged forward as if to save the boys. From the outside the appearance was one of rare destruction. The sidewalls of both buildings had caved in the same way, bringing with them the rafters and joists of both floors above, the heavy timbers crashing into the grocery and the hardware store, settling gradually as their weight, reinforced by the weight of other pieces, forced them downward.

"Quick, with both streams!" called the chief, as the flames sprang up on all sides, the exploding gasoline having struck all parts of the debris. Little fires started in all parts of the ruins, the smaller timbers, dry from long use away from the weather, acting as the fuel for the fire.

"Fight straight ahead!" roared the chief, now in a perfect frenzy, as the last timbers from the second story bent and fell with a loud crash into the debris. Truly it was a scene of destruction. Nothing now remained but the two side walls at the farthest sides of the stores, while darts and tongues of flame crept and leaped from nooks and corners in the debris, showing the force with which the gasoline had been scattered.

"Keep that stream shooting into the middle! The chances are that they tried to get away!" yelled Chief Pelton, raising his trumpet to his lips, and sending out his orders with a ferocity which he rarely exhibited. His two leading fire-fighters were somewhere in those ruins! They must be saved at all cost!

"Are you sure they are in there?" asked Hal, as he left the nozzle and advanced toward the chief.

"What? What? Do I know they are in there?—Yes!—No!—They went in the grocery a minute ago to see what they could do! They're not out here! They'd be with us now if they were out! They're buried!" His last words



were spoken with a savageness which exhibited the strain under which he was working. He had allowed those two boys to enter the most dangerous point of the fire, and now they were buried beneath all that deadening debris!

"Lend me your trumpet!" cried Ted, leaping toward the chief. The words were so peremptorily spoken, and with such an air of determination and purpose that the chief, as he stood uselessly gazing into the ruins, standing as if to make a dash forward at any moment, lifted his trumpet from about his neck and passed it to the boy without paying any other heed.

Quickly the young lad leaped upon the first projecting timbers of the ruins and rapidly picked his way across the piles of debris, passing the little tongues of flames which leaped and crackled in all portions.

"Dick! Terry! Dick!" he repeated the names, as he stopped at one point and placed the trumpet to his lips, pointing the instrument toward the ruins so that the voice would carry above the roar and din of the flames, the swish of water and the excitement of the people.

"Dick! Dick! Terry!" came his cry as he leaped across other piles of torn wood, level brick and heavy scantlings. All about him now the fire was burning, gaining here and there, finding each one a separate place for eating their ways into the ruins.

The crowd stood as if petrified. Men who a moment before would have rushed wildly into the ruins at the slightest call to save the two boys, now stood palsied, watching with eager eyes the young Washington lad as he darted about the heaps of ruins, picking his way from one pile to another, the flames leaping all about him, making a background, lurid, glorious, perilous, a background which alone would have made a masterpiece of a painting in an artist's hand.

Still there came no answer to the boy's call. Only waiting a moment after his trumpet call each time, he bent toward the ruins to catch the faintest sound of the voice of either, then leaped across some other pile of debris, past another patch of licking, leaping flames, pausing long enough to try his trumpet call once more.

The moment was tense. The crowd without the flaming ruins watched with interest the actions of the boy, listening with him for the voices of those who were buried beneath, groaning audibly as he turned away and leaped to another place. Twice he fell as his footing, insecure at the best, was too loose, some timbers turned or settled into other positions, more stable, and his hands went forward to save him. He seemed to be guided by no plan, appeared to wander over the ruins without thought of the fact that he had been at the same point a moment before.

"Call him back, chief! That boy will get caught before our very eyes!" roared Fred Parsons, who had come up with his Neptune company at the second alarm. "Call him back!"

But the chief stood as he had been standing when the boy leaped away with his trumpet several moments before.

"Heaven help those boys beneath!" was his response, repeated ever and anon under his breath.

"Keep your stream following him!" called Parsons to his lieutenant, Larry Downes. "That boy's liable to go down any minute! Watch him and don't let the stream get away from him!" With these words Parsons climbed steadily to the edge of the ruins, balanced himself for a moment on the heavy timbers which projected from the rear, and started across the ruins to join Ted.

A murmur of approval went the rounds of the crowd, and as those who knew the relations between Dick, Terry and this captain of the Neptune company realized his action, a loud cry went up. The crowd picked up the hurrahs of the wiser ones, and Parsons leaped across the piles of ruins with more certainty, his eyes watching every timber, changing about, following hither and thither, though he appeared to be making straight toward the center with some plan in view. Reaching about the center of the ruins, he paused, tried with his foot some of the lighter timbers, found one which was loose, and gaining a firm foothold he stooped and began work at this. In a moment he had loosed it from its fastenings below, moved it upward, then turned it to one side, and allowed his body to drop slowly into the hole which appeared beneath.

"Keep the stream this way, but don't get it too close!" he called through his trumpet, and then bent lower through the hole in the ruins. The tongues of flame were leaping from all sides, and there was but one direction from this point by which he could escape. The Washington stream had been moved to one side and its stream was directed across the rear end of the ruins, fighting back the flames which crackled and roared in their attempt to devour all that was left of the two buildings.

The crowd now watched in alternation both of the boys. They were working in different parts of the building, one simply dashing about, using his trumpet to attract attention, the other burrowing beneath the ruins.

In a minute's work Parsons was able to lower himself almost below the level of the debris. Bending now into the place which he had made, he lifted his trumpet and sent his message beneath the timbers.

"Dick! Halstead! Dick! Terry!" came the words, and then he listened closely for the response. The crowd seemed to understand. All sound from that direction was quieted, and it, too, listened for the answering voice.

"Dick! Dick! Halstead! Terry! Terry!" came the words again. And again Parsons dropped lower into the hole to listen.

"Right here!" came a low-spoken voice, and Parsons turned as quickly as was possible in his position, to learn whence came the sound. It was the voice of Dick Halstead!

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### DICK RESCUED BY PARSONS.

"Where are you?" asked Fred, after a second's hasty glance in the direction of the voice. There was no reply.



He repeated the question, and still there was no reply. Turning his trumpet toward his boys at the hose in the rear, he spoke:

"Brick, bring your axe, you and Downes! Get across here in a hurry!" Instantly a roar of applause went up from the expectant and anxious crowd, for it seemed to understand that he had found one or both of the boys beneath the ruins. A dozen or more started toward the ruins, but the chief was ahead of them, pointing out their places to various policemen who were stationed at convenient points about the ground. Having noticed the movement and caught the words of Fred Parsons, Ted Lester wasted not a moment. If Dick or Terry or both were found it was his to be with them at the moment of their rescue. It was his duty as a Washington and one of the closest friends of each of the fellows.

"Found them?" cried Brick Houston, as he leaped across the last pile of debris and joined Fred at that point.

"I don't know. I thought I heard Halstead's voice a moment ago."

Just at this time Hal and Joe, leaving the nozzle in the care of other Washingtons, came across the field of fire and ruin, each carrying an axe, ready to be in at the moment when the work should begin.

"We'll work in a circle, fellows!" commanded Parsons, assuming charge of the little band of six firemen who had gathered. "I'll take the center, and you fellows work away from me. Each one make a hole of his own and drop into it until we hear that voice again."

"It may have been——" and Brick stopped the sentence, as he fell at his work, and shook his head to himself. Brick was fearful lest——

"Dick! Dick! Halstead!" came the tense words of Fred, spoken through his trumpet, as he again made his way into the hole and tried to send his voice to the ears of those who were buried beneath. The ripping and tearing of timbers halted as the other workers heard Fred calling, and each listened intently for the reply. No word came in response. It was a moment of the extremest excitement for everyone. Without the lines, held in check by the sturdy police cordon, the crowd of Belmont citizens talked in low tones and whispers, wondering if the work which that crowd was doing there in the ruins meant that the boys had been located—and how were they?

The streams from the two lines of hose were holding the flames in check, and the boys at the nozzles advanced across the edges of the ruins into the piles of debris and fought at closer range. The leaping tongues of fire which had threatened to engulf the entire field of ruins now died away in the face of the onslaught of water, and there was less danger to the rescue party and to those who were beneath.

"Here! Quick!" came the orders of Fred Parsons.

The words brought the others to his side in an instant. Leaping from the holes which each was making for himself in the ruins, they gathered around him.

"I heard him plainly right under here!" and Parsons

bent to the work of excavating. Quickly the others joined hands in the work, lifting one piece of timber after another from its place, holding loose pieces from falling back into place, until a large clearing was made. The word went around that the boys had been found, but that nothing could be said of their condition. The chief leaped across the piles of debris to be at the work of rescue.

"Are they alive?" came the question from him.

"I heard a voice speaking to me a minute ago!" was the quick response of Parsons, and the reply, heard by those in the great crowd only a few yards away, listening intently from the first news, brought an echo of cheers.

"Lift above my head, slowly," came the muffled voice from beneath the ruins. "There is one loose timber there which is held by another lying across my body on the right side. Go slow and when it moves I'll tell you."

"He's giving directions about how to work!" almost screamed Parsons, in a burst of unfeigned delight. Instantly a yell went up from the anxious spectators.

"There! It moved! Take off the piece to the left and this one will be all right!" Right heartily the strength of six sturdy bodies was thrown against the weighing scantling.

"Now, lift off the cross one!" came the words from below, though much more audible now, as the covering was being removed.

As the large timber was removed, Dick's head was brought to view, and he smiled upward at the fellows who were working around him.

"Have you found Terry?" was his first question.

"No, isn't he close?" was Parsons' return query.

"I know about where he was when the thing caved in. Lift those timbers from across that counter and I'll pull my feet out. I think I know just about where he is."

The timbers were soon taken away, and Dick withdrew his legs from the opening in the counter, the only thing which saved him from being crushed to death. Stretching himself after getting out, so that he could gain command of his muscles again, he looked calmly over the ruins.

"Move in closer to that fire to the left!" he commanded, above the cheers and yells which came from the crowd when the people saw him climb out of the debris under which he had been so long buried. "Grogan, take the nozzle closer over there! Fight those flames back!" Then he turned again to the work of rescue. There was still another to be taken out of the place.

"Right here I think is about the place," he muttered as he sought a point about twenty feet away from the hole from which he had crawled. "He was about here when the crash came. I don't think he got any further."

The entire party, including the chief and Young Wide Awake, started heartily into the work of removing timbers from this particular spot.

"Good-morning to you! Bedad, Oi'm toired of this!" were the first words they heard from the imprisoned boy, and on the instant they sent up a wild yell of delight, which



was echoed and re-echoed by the vast crowd of spectators who watched the work with the most intense interest.

"Anything bearing on you, Terry?" Wide asked.

"There's some across me feet and one lying right on me right leg. But something stopped them above me head, for which thanks be given!"

There was careful work to be done. Something, of course, was holding the timbers from crashing upon him, and care must be taken lest one of these pieces be dislodged in the wrong place and the entire pile of scantlings and ripped and torn timbers come falling in upon the Irish lad.

"That's all roight!" he cried, and an instant later the crowd on the outside saw the boy crawl out of the hole and stand on top of the pile of ruins, rubbing his legs and gazing about him on the damage which had been done.

"Bedad, Oi thought for a while thot I'd be burned to death by the gasoline when Oi crawled out of there. Shure, it was looking bad for a while, with the smell of the stuff all around you and the foire a-crackling and roaring underneath. Shure, they must have done some good work with the water!"

"Both of you are all right!" called the chief, as he heaved a sigh of relief and took the boys by the hand. "Now we'll finish up the fire and sound the all-out. This has been a hard morning's work."

After a short while the companies reeled their lines of hose, and Dick, who had stood aside, talking to Kitty and Faith, heard the story of Fred Parsons. He hurried over to the Neptune engine.

"Parsons," extending his hand, "I want to thank you a thousand times for what you did. Words cannot tell what I think of you now. It wasn't a common bravery or courage which brought you into those ruins. That's not what I mean. You did nothing more than your duty, but I want to thank you for the way you did it. You worked like a man!"

"Nothing but my duty, Captain Halstead. Two lives were there to be saved, and I hope it will always be the practice of the Neptune company to save every life that is imperiled, or, at least, make the try. Your thanks are accepted in the spirit in which they are given. It was no more than my duty, and if I did it well, I can only say that I am glad."

Young Wide Awake was not sure that he understood the meaning which actuated the expression of these words, but he accepted them for what they might mean to him then, and turned back to his boys.

"Hurry the work, and get to the engine-house, fellows. It's early in the morning and we'll all want some rest."

"Dick, dear, I was frightened awfully for a while," murmured Kitty, as they were on their homeward way, Mr. Lester having called two cabs, in one of which the older couple rode, in the other being the two young couples.

"There was no danger. We were protected by the falling timbers crossing above the counters," he smiled in return.

"But we didn't know that. I know I must have attracted attention from the way I acted. But I couldn't help it. I knew you were in there, and I thought perhaps, perhaps——"

"You thought perhaps I would be carried out of there instead of crawling out, eh?"

"Yes, that was what I feared. The whole crowd was waiting every second for a sound from you, and when they heard from Fred that you were all right they cheered and yelled in perfect delight. Oh, Dick, isn't it nice to be well liked?"

"It is, dearie, but don't you know that the crowd would have treated anyone the same? Don't you know that human nature has its moments when it turns sorrowful for any one who is in trouble? There is always a feeling for the fellow who is buried in the ruins of a fire or a caved-in mine. If you will only read the papers at times of disaster, you will see that crowds which do not know the imprisoned or the dead men will feel sorry and will cheer the good news that is brought from the scene."

"You're right, but you are liked. I heard the people saying so. They were sorry for you and for Terry, and they wanted to see you brought out alive."

"But Parsons fooled me to-night. I never imagined that he would be the first to see me. I had an idea that when the rescue party arrived it would be headed by a Washington boy," murmured Dick.

"Fred did nobly to-night, and I feel grateful to him, indeed. He showed himself quite different from usual."

"Indeed he did. There must be something behind all this. I have seen the time when he would have sent me or any Washington into the flames or would not have allowed his hose to play, so that we could be protected, and yet, to-night he was among the first, and one of the only Neptunes who did anything toward getting us out."

"You ought to have seen Ted," said Kitty, "as he leaped across those flaming piles of wood, trying to find you. He was yelling for dear life through his trumpet."

"I heard him every time," answered Young Wide Awake, "but there was no chance for me to do anything. I yelled once or twice, and Fred heard me each time. I could hear him telling the people through his trumpet; but you see, those timbers above my head had me frightened, and I was fearful every second that they would come tumbling in upon me."

The little party arrived home in a short while, and when the carriage came to a halt at the side porch of the Lester home, Dick nor Kitty nor Faith nor Terry was in a happy mood over the quick drive. It had been much too quick, and as Dick pressed his arm more closely about Kitty he told her so.

"Well, we have had an exciting time and a glorious time to-night. We have seen Sothern and we have fought a fire. May the time be long, long distant when there is so much danger and excitement in one night again."

And the wish of Kitty was seconded by a kiss from Dick.



## CHAPTER V.

## FIRE AT THE ASYLUM.

"Dick, I have just learned that to-day is visitors' day this week at the asylum for the blind, and we wish you to go out with us to see Lucy. You know we were speaking of it the other day, and I had almost forgotten until Faith reminded me to-day."

Dick had just awakened from a long morning's sleep after the strenuous night and early morn, and was called to the telephone to receive this message from Kitty.

"Sure, I'll be glad to go out there. What time?"

"Let's say four o'clock. We would have plenty of time before it got dark. You know the days are getting longer."

"That means to be at your house at four?"

"Yes; you can see Terry and tell him that we are going. He'll be glad, I know, for he said the other day that he wished to go out with us."

"All right, I'll see him right away and we'll get ready. It's after two now, and we'll have to hurry."

So, settling the time for the visit, Dick sat down to his midday meal, and soon afterward he was on his way to Terry's house, where he found that boy just rising from his sleep.

"Terry, Kit called me up a few minutes ago and she says they have decided to go out to the asylum to see Lucy Creagh this afternoon. They want us to go, and we are to be at Kit's house by four."

"Oi'll be with you just as soon as Oi have something to eat. Shure, you don't suppose thot Oi'm not going to satisfy me inner man?"

"Plenty of time, Terry. It's not quite three o'clock now," answered Dick, consulting his watch, "and we are due out there at four. That will give you lots of time to satisfy that inner man of yours, which I suppose is very hard to satisfy just now."

Dick went into the dining-room with Terry and his mother, and there awaited the Irish lad while he ate his meal. Terry satisfied his "inner man" quite satisfactorily, thought Dick, and so he expressed himself, as Terry arose from the table. A few minutes later they were on their way to the other end of the city, to the Lester home, where they were to meet the young ladies for the drive to the asylum for the blind.

"It was well that you called me when you did," said Dick, "for I was just thinking of making a trip into the factory section for the purpose of seeing some plugs which the chief wished to have inspected for this month's report."

"Then you have left some work undone which you were to have finished to-day?" asked Kitty, hastily.

"Oh, no. I did not have to finish it to-day. The end of the month is not quite here, and the plugs are to be examined for the end-of-the-month report. I can examine them just as well to-morrow."

"You'll be chief of the fire department before long, if you keep up all the business that way," laughed Kitty.

"Shure, he could be chief right now, if he was wanted," spoke up Terry. "It is only one thing thot is keeping him from being chief now."

"What's that?" asked Faith.

"Not being asked," promptly answered the Irish boy.

"The same thing has kept many a good man down," Dick came back.

"Which means?" asked Kitty, raising her brows.

"Anything you wish to think it means," smiled Wide. And from this the conversation took a different turn. Young Wide Awake was not the sort who delighted or found pleasure in a discussion of himself, and so he changed the trend of all discussions which led in his direction.

Arrived at the asylum they were shown to the general parlors, where they saw the superintendent and were asked several questions before they were allowed to see Miss Lucy Creagh. One of the rules of the institution was that there should be certainty as to the visitors who were allowed to see those who had not been in the asylum for six months. After this matter was gone through with in the regular formal manner the young lady was brought to the parlors and there met her old-time friends. There was a pretty smile overspreading her face as she crossed the room to shake hands with them.

"Lucy, we are awfully glad to see you. How are you feeling?" were the first words spoken by Kitty, who was leading this delegation of visitors.

"It's good of you to come to see me. It's been rather lonesome here, for I am not acquainted, and though we make friends quickly, we who cannot see, there has not been enough to divert my mind."

Kitty wished to get her away from her affliction and tried in several ways to do so, but each time Lucy brought the subject back to the original starting point.

"Are you going to keep up your music, Lucy?" asked Kitty.

"Yes, indeed. It's about the only thing, really, that I can take up right now. You see, I cannot read, and I do not like to tire these poor girls out with reading to me. It would be boring to most of them what I would want read to me. My mind doesn't run, you know, to the average sort of reading, the light matter, and so these girls might not find as much pleasure in it as there is for me."

"Well, if you're going to keep up your music, you will want to hear the latest, won't you?"

"Indeed, yes! Have you anything new? Play it for me!" exclaimed the blind girl, joyously.

"We thought you would want to hear anything that is late, and so I have learned some of them. I'll play them over." Kitty went to the piano, Lucy following closely. Here Kitty played over six or seven of the latest songs and instrumental pieces, Lucy listening intently as she did so. After each of the pieces Lucy took the stool and went through the music, Kitty humming ahead of her so that she would find the right tones. The other two sat and watched the performances, appreciating most of all the aptitude shown by the blind girl. It was marvelous to them



that one so recently stricken should be happy with the piano and should so easily grasp the music which another had played. There were many corrections to be made in her rendition of the music, but after once being shown her errors she played the piece over again with very few faults.

"It's wonderful, Lucy, how you pick up your music," said Faith.

"Well, you see, I used to do it anyway, and it isn't very much different now, excepting that I have to watch my fingering ever so much more carefully. It is all a matter of placing my fingers on the piano right in the beginning. Of course, I would have difficulty in playing minor runs or anything which causes me to lift my fingers far from the last note they struck. I have to judge distances so closely."

After this they discussed the gossip of the little social events which were being held in these spring evenings, and Lucy learned all that was going on. It was nearing night-fall when the visitors were told that their time had expired and that they must bid good-bye to Lucy.

"I wish you would come often to see me. Just as often as you can. I like to talk about what has been going on in the crowd. We have nothing to do most of the day but sit about and think, and when I think to-morrow and in the future I shall think most often of you."

They bade their adieus, Lucy was escorted from the room, after Kitty had rushed upon her and kissed her several times, and the little party of visitors, saddened now and somewhat quiet, wended its way from the building. Without a word they climbed into the trap in which they had come, and Dick turned the horse's head toward home.

"How bravely she holds up, and yet I could hear a twinge of unhappiness and longing in her voice this afternoon. She is brooding over her condition. I wonder if there will never be a way to cure her?" Kitty was the first to speak, after they had driven in quiet for some distance.

"I noticed, too, that she was not far away from the subject of her blindness. She seemed to want to talk of it more than anything else," said Faith. The boys were silent. In the impressive sadness of the moment there was nothing they could say which might not have jarred on the delicate nerves of the girls at this time. And each, by a sort of telepathic consent, kept his silence.

"Well, Kit, dear, when do we see you again?" asked Wide, as they drove up to the driveway leading into the Lester grounds and turned in toward the great portico.

"Why not to-morrow? The afternoons these days are simply delightful. And I think it would be fine to take another drive—earlier in the afternoon, don't you?" answered the young lady.

"Bedad, that's just the thing. I never knew how well girls could plan until Oi followed the plans of you people," said Terry.

"Until to-morrow, then," called Wide, as the boys walked off toward the car-line.

"Dick, Oi was thinking this afternoon——"

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The sound of the fire-bells of the city, the alarm call to

duty, broke into the conversation. They had ridden but a few blocks toward town, the car running slowly.

"Say, conductor, move the car faster! Get that motorman to drive her as fast as he can!" yelled Dick, addressing the man on the rear end.

"Against the rules, sir," replied the conductor.

"The rules be blamed! That's a fire alarm and we're firemen. We're due at the engine-house just as quick as we can get there!"

"All right!" cried the conductor, and he hurried through the car to tell the motorman. In another minute they picked up speed and were going into the business section of the city as fast as this electrical equipage could take them in.

A quick dash across the remaining block to Holmes Street brought them to the engine-house as the boys were moving the apparatus out of the building.

"Where is it? I couldn't catch the alarm!" cried Dick, rushing up the steps to the dressing-rooms above.

"At the blind asylum!" came the response of Hal and Joe in one breath.

"At the asylum!" cried Dick to Terry, and both boys stopped and looked at each other in horror-struck expressions. "At the asylum!" murmured Dick.

The words were spoken softly several times, each one muttering them to himself, as they hurried into their fire-togs, and leaped for the pole to go below.

"Call up the girls and tell them, Terry! You can catch up with us, all right!"

Right quickly he rushed out of the front door, gave his orders for the run, and the apparatus was off for the scene of the fire. It was a long run, too long for these boys to take, almost, and Dick kept his eye on the search for a vehicle which could pull them to the place. Spying one away out Main Street, he ran ahead of the boys and rapidly gained on the light wagon.

"Say!" he yelled, as he drew nearer, "we want you to take this apparatus to the fire! The city will pay you! Wait there and let the boys climb in!"

The driver pulled up, the firemen at the running-ropes of the apparatus understood from a distance, and pulled the harder to get to the place quickly.

"Over with you into the wagon!" cried Dick, picking out the smaller boys for the ride. He knew that all could not go, and some would have to ride the engine so that they could manage the ropes of the hose-cart. In a few moments the arrangements were complete, and the light wagon drove on at a goodly pace, the apparatus rattling on behind at a better speed than the boys could have brought it. Those who were the best runners kept their hands on the pieces of apparatus and ran behind. This is an easy matter, at moderately fast speed, and the boys were not inconvenienced.

As they rounded the clump of trees which fringed the road, they saw the blaze ahead. They had made a quick run, and knew there was much work cut out for them in this fire.

One of the outbuildings was on fire, one of the larger



ones which had been a sort of storehouse and laundry combined, a building which stood close beside the main building. It was of frame, as were all the buildings on the grounds. The first thing that Dick noticed was that none of the girls were yet out of the main building!

"Unreel and get to the plug!" commanded Young Wide Awake, as he leaped from the rear of the hose-cart and came dashing ahead of the vehicle which had brought them.

Like a lot of young beavers, leaping from all parts of the wagon at one time, the boys went at their work, though it at first appeared that none knew what he was to do nor where he was to go. A moment's watching would have convinced the stranger, however, that these boys never knew anything more perfectly than their duties at a fire.

In much less time than it takes to tell it, they had the hose strung for the fight, and the command for the stream came through his trumpet from Dick. The engine was stationed some distance from the fire, for the nearest water connection was farther than usual on grounds of this kind.

"Will you be able to save the building?" cried the superintendent, as he rushed up to Dick and stood there quaking with fear.

"Get the young ladies out of that main building!" cried Dick in reply. "This building is sure to go, and the wind is blowing straight at the other.

Dick's words were issued like a thunderclap, and the superintendent ran wildly back to the main building, crying all the way:

"Get the girls out of the building! It is going to be destroyed!"

"What a blundering idiot!" spoke Dick in an undertone. "He'll have a panic started there in less than one minute! What fools some men can be!"

He leaped away from his position near the nozzle and started in pursuit of the man.

## CHAPTER VI.

### LIFE'S HAZARD FOR A LIFE.

"Stop that man!" yelled Young Wide Awake, as he noticed Terry coming around the building.

In an instant Terry leaped toward McConnell, the superintendent, and brought him down with a swift, low tackle. Terry did not know why the man was wanted, did not know why Dick had called that he be stopped, but Terry did know that the order was to be obeyed.

"What's the trouble, Dick?" he asked, as he arose quickly and placed a knee on the struggling and gasping McConnell.

"Let him up, Terry," smiled Wide, and he gave the man a hand.

"Outrageous! Outrageous!" gulped the superintendent.

"My friend, don't go yelling to that building in the wild way you started. It will start a panic!" commanded Young Wide Awake.

"But we must get them out of there! The place is going to be destroyed!"

"Do you want every one of those girls killed?" asked Dick.

"No, no; I want to get them out!" he almost screamed.

"Stay here with him, Terry, and don't let him make a yell. He almost started a panic by his foolishness. Keep him quiet!" With this Dick ran toward the main hall of the asylum, keeping an eye, as he ran, on the girls who were leaning on the window sills, hugging each other, and crying to those below if there was any danger.

"No danger! Stay where you are!" called Young Wide Awake, as he dashed toward the front door of the building and started up the stairs. Already the sparks from the burning structure had ignited the main hall, and the long tongues at the rear were leaping out toward this larger building. He knew the time was short in which he could do anything, and he knew he must get every girl out of the place before they could gain an idea that they were really in danger.

"Go on, Dick, I'm with you!" cried Ted, who had followed closely behind and was at his captain's heels.

The nurses were crowded at the head of the stairs, waiting for the superintendent to return, for his instructions had been that they must await his orders before acting.

"What shall we do? What shall we do?" they groaned in anguish, and Dick at once recognized what their words were doing. The blind girls who stood behind the nurses were already bustling about as well as they might, seeming to scent the danger which impended.

"There is no danger!" cried Wide. "Bring the young ladies down the stairs and into the fresh air for awhile!"

Almost instantly there was quiet among those who stood behind the nurses and Dick thanked the impulse which had caused him to tell the little white lie.

"Just lead the young ladies down the steps!" he called to them, himself starting up the flight of stairs to give aid to the nurses in the conduct of the poor blind girls. One by one they were led to the head of the stairs and then guided safely down the narrow stairway to the floor beneath. Out into the yard they went, and instantly the nurses saw that Wide had not told them the truth. The main building was doomed! There was no chance to save it! Already the Washington hose was playing on the roof, while the flames were leaping through the second-story windows on the rear, leaping from out of the sea of fire which surrounded and entirely engulfed the outer building!

"Send that stream at the second story!" yelled Wide, "and hold the fire from taking that stairway!"

What it was that caused him to issue such an order he never knew. It was something from out of his impulse which came unguided and unsought, but it was lucky. Quickly the water was diverted from the roof to the windows of the second story. Just then a head came from out of a window on the fourth floor and a scream pierced the air.

"Help! Help!" Wide glanced upward and saw one of the patients standing at the window! It was Lucy Creagh! The glaring light of the flames which licked and leaped and roared and crackled about the buildings was such that he could not mistake. It was Lucy Creagh! How forgetful he had been during the excitement of the moments of rescue not to have thought to look for her among those who were conducted down the stairway!

"Keep your stream on the second story!" he screamed to his boys, dashing toward the front door and making ready for the ascent. The flames had already made much head-



way in that part of the building, and he looked upward to see that the fire was in a commanding position already along the narrow stairway which led to the fourth floor! He must go through that fire! There was no other way!

Lowering his head and pulling his helmet well across his eyes to protect them and his nostrils from the fire and the smoke, Wide dashed up the stairs, pausing not a moment as he felt his feet reach the second story, but going straight ahead toward the third. There was no time to waste!

"Lucy! Lucy!" he called, searching along the hallway for the room from which she was leaning.

"Lucy! Lucy!" But there came no reply. With a crash he sent his body against one of the doors of the hallway, and luckily struck the right one! Lucy Creagh was standing on the window-sill, preparing to make a leap to safety, trusting to chance rather than suffer the fate which she thought was hers.

"Don't jump! Don't jump!" he heard the voice of Terry calling from below. Lucy had faltered and waited at the sound of those words.

"Lucy!" he cried, as he leaped across the room, and grasped her securely about the waist, pulling her back into the room. Instantly a cry went up from those below. Whether it was one of relief or gladness or fear Dick did not think. Perhaps he did not even hear the cry.

With Lucy in his arms he darted back into the hallway, to the head of the stairs, and started—but all chance was gone! The stairway below was a solid, impassable mass of flames, crackling in awful glee their proposed requiem on those who yet remained above.

The window was now their only chance! Back into the room he dashed, bearing Lucy as well as his waning strength would permit, speaking softly to her:

"We'll be out in a moment, Lucy. Don't be afraid. There isn't any danger." She remembered instantly the many deeds of this boy captain of the Washington company, and accepted what he said.

Leaning out of the window he took a survey of the scene. The smoke was issuing from the second-story windows in great clouds, and the flames were leaping along at a merry pace from the outer building which was now almost totally destroyed. This fire had swept on its way to victory hurriedly, giving no opportunity for contest on the part of the young firemen.

"Somebody to that roof!" called Young Wide Awake, through his trumpet, indicating a low roof which adjoined the main building, and which was not yet harmed by the flames. Quickly there was a scurrying of feet and four of his boys, the best trusted ones of the company, were soon scrambling to the top of the smaller building.

In the meanwhile Dick was busy. Within the room he was making the means by which they would escape.

"Let me help you up here, Lucy," he spoke kindly to her, conducting her feet to the low sill of the room. "Now, take a firm hold on this sheet. Hold tightly, for I'm going to lower you down to the boys below," he continued.

She grasped the knotted sheet tightly in a desperate clutch and prepared for the ordeal.

"Are you ready below?" he called, sticking his head out of the window past the girl, so that he could see whether the boys had taken the position he intended.

"We're ready!" came the ready response, and Dick made preparations for the rescue. Lifting her from her feet he lowered her easily, keeping the sheet-rope wound about his shoulders and firmly held in one hand. This manner of action served to keep the rope from slipping from his grasp while he was handing her out of the window. He had been fearful that she would suddenly leap and would snap the sheet in twain.

Wide swung the girl toward the low roof, the rope of knotted sheets doing its work well. Back she swung above the cloud of smoke and the leaping flames, then forward toward the eager hands of the courageous boys who waited there. Hal reached far out, holding as best his weight would allow to the sidewall, and grasped at her dress as she swung toward him. Quickly he snatched her skirts, pulling her toward him with all his might, at the same instant allowing Terry to reach forward. Instantly she was pulled to the low roof and a cheer went up from below. But Dick was yet in the fourth floor, with all chance of escape cut off!

"Stay there a moment!" he called, and turned back to the room. In a minute more he appeared at the window, this time knotting another sheet to the ones which he had used. Stooping, he tied one end to the leg of the bed which he dragged closer to the window, and threw the other end out to the open air. Then, crawling over the window sill, he let himself out on the rope, going easily down, and gradually swinging himself out from the wall so that he could get forward to the roof where were his boys. Three swings brought him far toward them, and then he swung back again. The smoke was pouring so thickly out of the second-floor windows that he was obscured from their sight as he swung away. Almost instantly, however, he swung again into sight, coming straight toward them, and as he neared the corner of the main building, eager hands grasped one foot, another had him by the leg, and he released his hold. His weight was almost too much for his rescuers! For a moment the two boys dangled at the edge of the low roof, then he felt himself lifted bodily upward, and reached for the edge of the roof, which he grasped firmly, then turned on his side—and he was safe!

"Off of here in a hurry!" he gasped, his lungs filling with the smoke which puffed up from below in great clouds.

"The building's gone!" he muttered to himself, as he gained the ground and looked at the dingy old place, now a mass of flames, ruined surely beyond all hope of repair.

"Captain Halstead, my compliments: that was well done!" spoke the chief, advancing to Dick and extending his hand.

"But this fire is spreading!" answered Young Wide Awake.

"May as well let it burn out, Halstead. There is no chance to save anything here now, and there will be no spread to the other buildings. Your stream has been moved to them for protection."

Dick now noticed for the first time that the hose had been pulled away from the main hall and that the stream was directed at several of the smaller outbuildings which seemed to have been in danger.

In a short while the main building caved in, and the water was sent at the ruins, the first of the outer buildings having already given way to the too heavy top weight.



"Dick, I want to thank you for your bravery. It was so noble of you!" murmured a pretty voice at his side, and Young Wide Awake turned to find Lucy and Kitty close beside him.

"Lucy! I'm awfully glad we got you out of there without causing you the trouble of jumping. It looked bad for a little while," was the only response which he could make.

"It was so noble in you! But that was to be expected," she went on, and Dick was visibly affected by her sincerity and openness.

"Only what every fireman should do," he replied.

"That doesn't keep me from thanking you and saying how noble and brave I think you are," she continued.

He nodded to Kitty to lead Lucy away, and just then Terry came up to tell him that the boys at the engine were worn out and that there seemed little need for more work on the ruins.

"All right, Terry, sound the all-out. I guess there is little danger."

With this short order the boys began reeling, preparatory to their trip back to the city, and the chief called upon the driver of the wagon to take the apparatus back to the engine-house.

"That's a useless expense on the city, chief. We can take the machines back all right," said Wide.

"This expense is not on the city nor on your company," announced Chief Pelton. "This expense is on me and I'm going to have my way. You boys climb into the wagon and we'll all take a drive. Will you go in my buggy, Captain Halstead?"

"Since you are so kind, chief, there is little else left for me to do. I could not well refuse your offer," he smiled at the chief.

"You could if you wished," whispered Pelton to Young Wide Awake. "The young ladies might want an escort, and if you desire to go with them I shall not say anything. Which is it?"

"I haven't been asked to join them," said Dick.

"But you will be. Just roam over toward my buggy and I think you will not return with me." The chief smiled knowingly and winked at Dick as he spoke, directing the boy's glance toward his buggy by a sign of his shoulders.

Dick's eyes followed in the direction of the signal, and saw the young ladies standing by their equipage, evidently waiting for someone.

As they caught his glance in their direction, Kitty and Faith beckoned to him to join them—which he did forthwith.

"The chief told me that I could have a choice of riding with him or with you," said he, as he joined them.

"And which do you choose?" asked Kitty.

"I didn't have any opportunity. You have already chosen."

## CHAPTER VII.

### FAST RUNNING AND SHOOTING.

Sunday afternoon was one of the glorious days of the early spring, with a tang of coolness in the air, lending energy and strength to the body and mind of the many who were out to enjoy an afternoon's walk.

Terry and Dick had elected to take a long stroll along

the river, taking the road leading southward, and were walking slowly, now that they had covered a distance which brought them opposite the main side of Bogg's Ferry. The conversation had drifted from one thing to another, the fire of the asylum, of course, being the latest topic for their discussion.

"When we get back to town we must go out to the Les- ters and ask how Miss Lucy is," suggested Young Wide Awake.

"Roight you are. Oi want——"

Bang! Bang!

Both boys wheeled sharply at the sound of the pistol shots, which appeared to have been fired on this side of the river, and saw one man stagger just at the river's brink and fall headlong over the slight embankment toward the water. Into a small boat, which they had already noticed some moments before was moored at the regular ferry landing, leaped two men, roughly dressed, one of them quickly placing the oars in their locks and taking up a long sweeping pull as soon as he had violently, but skilfully, shoved off.

"After them!" breathed Wide, as he leaped away toward the river.

It was too late! The oarsman was an apt one and had taken the boat well into the river out of reach of anything on shore. Wide ran hastily toward the point where they had seen the man fall, and looked over the little embankment. There lay a man with his feet in the water, slowly struggling in an effort to regain his normal position!

Dick leaped down, followed closely by Terry, and lifted the man to his feet. It was Chief Sharp of the Belmont police force!

"Chief! Don't you know us?" he asked.

"Yes! Where are those fellows? Have they gone? How long have I been here?" He asked the questions as if he had been asleep for some time.

"You have been here only a minute. Those fellows are now in the river going toward the east side of the ferry."

"I'm all right. Just got jolted when I fell. The bullets grazed me on the shoulder and the leg." As evidence of the truth of this statement he quickly threw aside his coat and a few drops of blood along the shoulder testified to the fact that the bullet intended for his head had only grazed his shoulder-point. He pointed to the hole in his trousers to show that the other bullet had passed through the trousers without more than scratching his leg.

"After those fellows! I'm all right now!" cried the chief, straightening to his full height, anxious now to be away in pursuit.

"We cannot cross here, chief. Those fellows are right now pulling safely up to the landing, just below the ferry." Wide shaded his eyes to be the more certain, for the western sun was throwing its strongest, most potent, reflections across the water, casting them upward on the eastern shore as a cloak and protection to the actions of the men who were escaping the arm of the law so hurriedly and successfully.

All three stood on the ferry landing and gave vent to yells which they thought might attract those who were attending the ferry on the other side. At first there was no attention paid. Then the chief bethought himself of his whistle and blew several sharp blasts, which immediately attracted the attention they desired.

"Stop those men! Stop those men!" yelled Wide, Terry



and Chief Sharp in their most stentorian tones. Quickly a boat put out from shore, and started for the three on this side. The people had not understood!

The chief blew several more blasts on the whistle.

"Stop those men!" he called, waving his arms and pointing toward the two who were now landing easily at the farther shore, several hundred yards above the landing, having changed their course at the last minute.

"No use, chief! We'll have to cross and go after them," said Wide, after their attempts to make themselves understood had availed them nothing. "They will have a first-class start, but we can gain nothing here."

Uselessly they stood on the landing and waited for the coming of the rowboat. The ferry-boat, only slightly larger than a rowboat, stood at her moorings on the other side and made no attempt to cross. As the oarsmen came leisurely around in the middle of the river and battled easily against the running current, the chief yelled to them:

"Hurry that boat! We're after some thieves who just crossed!"

With these words coming to them, the oarsmen picked up speed and rapidly came in toward the landing.

"Into it, boys, and we'll go after them! This boat will not go fast enough with all of us, so you two fellows will have to wait here until we can send back for you," spoke the chief to the two who had brought the rowboat across the river. "We'll have to be on the other side just as quickly as we can pull this boat over!"

While he was speaking, Dick was arranging the oars in the locks, and with one steady push he shoved the little craft away from the ferry landing and turned her nose downstream. This was the easier way of gaining speed, and he calculated that the loss in distance by this drifting could be made up by the momentum gained when they had to move upstream on the farther side.

Steadily, with long, sweeping movements of the oars, Wide carried the boat cutting through the water, shipping absolutely no water, so clean was the stroke and so even was his management of the boat. Reaching past the middle of the river he turned her nose upstream, aiming just above the landing, thus giving something to the current which would carry them downward. His guess was good, for without making another tack he sent her flying past the landing, slowing but very little, and depending on his passengers to stand and leap overboard when the right moment came. This they did. Then, shipping his oars, he cast his painter out and with a deft movement whirled it about a stake which stood close beside the landing.

"Which way did they go!" yelled the chief, his excitement rising, now that he was on the same side of the stream.

"Where did who go?" inquired several who were standing about the ferry landing, watching the movements of the rowboat as it came in.

"Those fellows who landed here a few minutes ago! They landed right below the ferry and started along the road!"

"There was two fellows who tied up down there, but I didn't notice which way they took," volunteered one of the men.

Just then another joined the crowd on the ferry landing, and now he spoke up:

"I passed two fellers who was running along the road to Norwich. They looked like they was running away from somebody, but it wasn't none of my business and I didn't butt in. They was looking back to'rd the river and then I saw you fellers pulling up to the landin'."

"To Norwich, then!" cried the chief, and all three set off past the landing to the road which led northward. The chief was not so fleet as the two boys, and he did not keep up with them.

"You boys run on and locate them. I'll follow!" he cried to them, now breathing hard, and the boys drew rapidly away from him as they sped onward toward the town. The road was not altogether a straight one, and it was only a few minutes when they passed out of the chief's sight.

"I wonder which way they went? They probably went straight into the town," said Dick, speaking slowly so that little of his breath would be taken in the effort.

"Oi guess they took right into Norwich," replied the Irish boy, himself conserving all his wind for the final spurt.

Side by side they kept up the pace, and finally were rewarded with the last bend in the road, and the way to Norwich stretched in a straight line.

"They ought to be in sight. I know they didn't go this fast," said Wide, as he craned his neck a little to get a better view of the road.

"Maybe turned down that last crossroads," answered Terry.

"We forgot to look carefully, too. That's about the gag," and they slowed a bit to plan whether they should return. "Better stop here and go back," he continued. "What do you think?"

"Oi'd rather take a chance on going back. Oi've a hunch they're back the road some place. They never came here as fast as this."

"All right, let's start back again."

With this the two boys turned in the direction from which they had come and retraced their steps. The pace which they employed was not so fast, the chief reason being that their wind was almost spent and they knew they could not afford to keep up the same speed on the return.

"It may be that we passed them somewhere on the road. They might have gone into one of those fields," suggested Wide.

"Thot's just about it. Oi feel dead certain they never came to this bend on the run thot we did, and we could have seen them on the way into Norwich, even at thot."

"You're right, Terry," answered Young Wide Awake. "They've just given us the grand slip by getting behind some of those trees or bushes and they're laughing at us this very minute." The boys picked up a little better pace as they talked, bringing them to the big oak at the bend in the road sooner than they had planned. Here there was a short stretch of smooth road, beyond was another bend, and toward this they made a speedy run, hoping within themselves that their guesses were right and that the two fellows would have come out by this time from their hiding places.

Crack! Crack! The reverberations of two pistol shots came to their ears.

"Wasn't that straight ahead?" asked Wide, stopping of a sudden.



"Right around that bend, Oi thought," as Terry leaped away, closely followed now by Dick. They made the next bend in an incredibly short time.

"Help! He—lp!" came a cry, which Dick thought he recognized, and if it were possible to describe it so, he increased his speed.

Up to the next bend in the road they raced, side by side, turned about the fence which stood between them and the pistol shots, as they thought. Two forms were dashing away along the road, while someone lay near the road, struggling to rise, and both boys saw the fallen man raise a pistol and fire twice. It was Chief Sharp! A hundred yards away one of the fellows reeled slowly from the middle of the road, staggered for a step or two, tried to regain his balance, and fell. The other turned only long enough to see that someone had come to the aid of the chief, and, leaving his fallen partner, he sped on toward the landing from which they had come only a few minutes previously.

"Here! Here!" cried the chief, holding out his revolver, "take this and make the run! Try to wing that fellow! We've got to have him!" Dick grabbed the revolver from the hands of the chief, and, without saying another word, without inquiring into the man's condition, he started in pursuit. The leader had a good start, more than a hundred yards, and was picking up a better pace, it seemed, at every step. He had the advantage of having had a rest while the boys had dashed past toward Norwich on the first run.

"Halt! Halt!" commanded Dick, as he ran. The man in front halted not nor slowed. It was plain that he knew it were best for him to keep up his dash for liberty and take chances on a possible shot from the gun. Dick lifted the revolver, and, taking a quick aim, he let go.

Crack! Crack! Crack! The three shots were taken at a high speed, for he reasoned that he would shoot better while running this way than by slowing down. He knew that his nerves were now at high tension and that his aim would be about as normal as if he had been standing still for some time. The nerves were relatively in the same condition.

The first shot struck up the dust to the right of the pursued. The second struck the ground in front and to the left. The third shot, taken with no better aim, did not strike the ground. Dick's heart fell. He had failed to hit, and had missed so widely on the third trial that he had not even torn up the dust near the fellow! Just then he saw the pursued man lose one step, falter in his run, stagger a step or two from the road, and then he fell.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! Four shots came in quick succession, and each of them tore up the ground about our hero. This fellow was not wounded beyond a fight! There still was some fight left in him.

Quickly Dick leveled his gun on the fallen man and let fly the last remaining shot. It was a hasty aim, but a true one. The fellow's arm went up in the air, he straightened for a moment, and by this time Dick had reached him. This was how close the fight was carried on. As the fellow had fallen Dick had closed the gap which lay between them and even had continued his running forward as the man fired the four shots.

Bending over him quickly Dick saw that the shots which he had fired at the fleeing man had not done irreparable

damage—just two wounds in the legs which had caused him some weakness.

"Give me that gun!" he cried, as he brought his own weapon at a level with the fellow's head, taking a menacing position.

The man lying on the ground did not know the bluff. He did not know that there was not another shell left in Dick's revolver, but he handed the weapon upward without a murmur.

"Are you hurt bad?" he asked, laconically.

"In de legs. It don't 'mount to much."

"Turn over," commanded Dick, as if he had no feeling whatever. He knew it were best to appear hard-hearted in such a case, lest the fellow take advantage of any kindness.

The fellow started to turn to his other side, and in making the movement Dick saw that another gun was coming into sight from beneath his coat.

"Stop that! Give me that gun!" and he brought both his weapons quickly to a level.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DICK SCENTS A MYSTERY.

Dick being left on the scene to keep charge of affairs, Terry ran into Norwich and telephoned to the headquarters in Belmont for help. In a short while a suitable vehicle was on hand, and the injured men were taken back to the city.

"What is all the trouble, anyway?" asked Wide, when he and the chief had a chance to talk the matter over while waiting for Terry to get the aid.

"Both of them wanted for murder and highway robbery. That was a dangerous crowd that we were following to-day," replied the chief.

"Who did they murder? I didn't know of anything," said Dick.

"Wanted for murder aboard some vessel at Brockport. That one lying over there by the tree is 'Long Jerry,' one of the worst characters in the police record. His story is a long one and it's one that's chock full of interesting criminal details. He has done everything from stealing women's purses to robbing stages, trains and banks. From what I hear he has killed a dozen men in such duels as this we fought to-day."

Dick looked at the fellow again and wondered. To think that he had winged and captured one of the worst criminals known to the history of the police! It was more than he could comprehend!

"He doesn't look so bad. He handed over easily enough when he fell," said Young Wide Awake.

"Yes, and you noticed that he had another gun somewhere about him. If you hadn't been watching pretty closely he would have had you in another minute. I wouldn't give two cents for a man's life as long as that fellow has a gun handy. He's one of the worst ever."

Dick took another look at the fellow, saw a rather peculiar movement, and kept a closer eye in that direction.

Suddenly the fellow turned to one side, and Dick grabbed a club. Raising it quickly he sent it flying in the direction of the tree, following it closely by leaping from the ground and running rapidly at the fellow.

The aim was an excellent one. Long practice at throwing



had made him an expert, almost, at hurling clubs and bats. This club, accidentally being of even balance, struck the fellow just as he was raising one arm and before he could recover from the surprise of the flying missile striking him, Dick was on him, sending both knees into the fellow's side.

Reaching about he caught the uplifted arm as it attempted to swing into the air again, and Dick's hand caught at another pistol, raised for its deadly work.

"Didn't I tell you? Search that fellow all over and be careful of him," said the chief, from his position by the fence at the opposite side of the road.

Dick went carefully over the fellow's person, trying every place where he thought there might be a pistol carried. There was no other weapon, but there was a huge wad which Dick abstracted from one pocket and brought over to the chief, backing across the road so that the fellow could not make a simple move without being detected.

"Here's all there was," he said, as he stooped to hand the chief the package. "This was sticking in one pocket. It might be something."

"His last 'lift' must have been a good one," spoke the chief.

"It must have been a bank," suggested Wide.

"Or an express safe. That fellow has never stopped short of the best there is. He's a character worth capturing and we'll have to watch him like a hawk watches a chicken. I haven't any manacles, so you'll have to keep your eyes on him. The other fellow is all right; he's hit where he won't give much trouble. I think my flying shot took him somewhere near the chest, from the way he looks."

It was now only a very short while until Terry came with the help from Belmont. Connors, the chief's assistant, was leading the party, directing the wagon which brought everything that was needed. As they drove up to the spot, Connors leaped out and, instead of inquiring about the chief's injuries, he hurried across the road to the man who lay by the other fence, in the shade of the tree.

"Oho!" as he stooped over the man and looked squarely into his face. "Long Jerry, eh? Howdy, Jerry? What brought you up in this section? I didn't think there was anything big enough for you!"

"Huh!" was the only reply, as the captive turned on his other side and lay still. It was evident that he cared little for the society of any more.

"It's been a long time since we saw each other, Jerry," as Connors placed the manacles about the hands of the man, and beckoned Terry to give him a lift. "Come on, now, like a good fellow. We have a palace of a jail, and the fellows will treat you like a prince. You can't imagine the difference between our pretty little place and the dungeons and dank-holes of other places. We are proud of our beautiful rooms. Where have you been since we met last?"

"Huh!" was the only response, though Jerry had taken several keen looks in the direction of the speaker. The glances were such that they soon brought an expression of recognition across the crafty face.

"Remember me, eh? We had a lively run the last time I saw you. It was over in Ohio when you touched a bank for everything it had excepting the cancelled checks and the safe doors. You were awfully kind to leave them, so the banker told me. He said you were select in your choice of goods and that you took only those things which would

do you the most good, leaving behind those which would be good for the bank to have. I have laughed many a time about that shooting match we had in the river. You're an awfully poor shot on the run, Jerry, but I can't help but admire your nerve. This is your grandest exhibition—this coming into Belmont, for we have the reputation of entertaining to a greater extent than most cities of this size."

"Did you know him before, Mr. Connors?" asked Wide, when everything was prepared for the homeward trip, and he climbed up on the seat beside the assistant.

"Yes, I knew him before I came to Belmont. It has been a long time ago, but his face hasn't changed much. I have heard of many of his exploits since that time, and I suppose he has seen even more of the world than I."

Connors chuckled to himself as he finished, pulled out an old pipe, carefully filled it with tobacco and started to puff the clouds of smoke from the blackened stem.

"I have wondered lots of times if you had caught any of these dangerous fellows," said Wide, speaking very cautiously, for he had always stood in a certain awe of Connors. Connors had come to Belmont only a year before, and had never told much of what he had been or what he had done in other days. He was a talkative chap, but a reticent one when conversation drifted to the past. He seemed to have lost something of life and was never anxious to discover what the loss might be.

"Jerry," nodding toward the wagon-bed where the wounded captive lay, "is one of the most notorious in the police history—at least, in the region from which I came. I haven't heard much of him save through the papers and letters from old friends. He never operated much in this part of the country, and for that reason is not so well known personally. He's here now, though, and I haven't the slightest doubt that he has left his traces behind."

"Have you any idea that he has done anything recently? What right have we to arrest him?" asked Young Wide Awake.

"Just suspicion, if nothing else. His picture is in the gallery, and his name heads all of them on the list of men wanted. He just committed a murder a few nights ago, down at Brockport." This was about the most communicative that Dick expected Connors to become with him, and he was rapidly learning to like the assistant chief. The man had been around the country and had seen things beyond the simple pale of Belmont and this part of the world.

"And do you know the other fellow?" asked Dick.

"He is a new one to me at first glance. Maybe I do know him. We'll see after we reach headquarters," and Connors vouchsafed no more until they had turned down Main Street, after the long drive. Arriving at headquarters, it was late in the afternoon. The news that the chief of police had been killed, that Dick and Terry were seriously injured, and that two bold, bad robbers were being brought home in coffins—all of this news was cause for the crowd which stood on the various corners and waited for the coming of the parade. When the crowd saw Chief Sharp sitting on the seat of the wagonette, with Terry beside him; when it saw Dick and Connors holding the seat of the wagon, and two men sitting up, too, in the wagon, it began to speculate on the real enormity of the shooting affray. The news had come that a shooting affray had taken



place, and Dame Rumor, as is ever her wont, enlarged upon some of the facts.

"Hello, Sharp! They say you are dead, or dying, I've forgotten which!" cried Chief Pelton, of the fire department, as the party drove up to the police headquarters, and Chief Sharp climbed out of the vehicle.

"Not dead, Pelton—just a dead one!" laughed the police chief, as he turned to help Connors take the captives from the wagon.

"What did you get? Looks like you have something!" said Pelton.

"We came back with something, all right, but it's only thanks to Halstead. He did a good bunch of shooting on the other side. And, by the way, he can pull a boat faster than a horse can run," laughed Sharp in response. Dick blushed slightly at this remark, and himself climbed from the seat to give aid to the removal of the captives from the vehicle.

Inside the private office of the chief of police there gathered the two boys, Wide and Terry, the chiefs of the fire and police departments, and Connors. Here was discussed the episode of the afternoon, Sharp telling the entire story.

"I was scouting along the south road on this side in the early afternoon, because I had seen these fellows during the morning by the depot and they looked suspicious. I wasn't quite sure of the face of Jerry, but I thought it resembled a little photograph that hangs in my gallery. Anyway, I took the chance of following the pair. They led me south on the old road, and I lost them somewhere near the ferry landing on this side of Bogg's. The land rises, you know, along the river at this point, and there is a heavy growth of bushes and shrubbery. All of a sudden, while I was walking down the little path to the landing to take a look both ways, up the river and down, these two fellows sneaked up behind me and started a wrestling match. They didn't give me a fair chance to get my favorite jiu jitsu holds, or any other fancy grips of mine, but they just started into clubbing my head. This worried me," he laughed, and the others joined in, "and I went after my gun. When this happened they leaped back and before I could get a good pull on the weapon this Jerry fellow lifted his cannon and began fire before I asked him to. But, thanks to his nervousness, he only succeeded in spoiling my clothes to a small extent. One of the pellets went through my coat and another through my trousers. I want the magistrate to fine him enough to-morrow morning to buy me a new suit. He's spoiled this one."

The men in the office laughed and helped along the light words for a moment or two, and then fell to speaking of the matter seriously. Sharp took up the thread of his story and told of the coming of Dick and Terry and what they had done toward the capture of the two men.

"What will be the charge preferred to-morrow morning?" asked the chief of the fire department, who was always interested in these cases.

"I'll send word to the Brockport authorities this afternoon, and they can send their charge up by one of their men," replied the chief of the police. "Of course, our only charge just now will be disorderly conduct, dangerous and suspicious characters, assault with a pistol, and assault with intent to murder. If I can think of any more charges to keep them here in jail for awhile I shall enter them to-

morrow morning. In the meanwhile they can lie in their cells and draw three meals per diem."

"Mr. Connors," said Dick, after the little meeting had adjourned and the men were leaving the office, "do you know the other fellow?"

"Eh, what?" snapped Connors, turning quickly upon Dick. "Oh, I beg your pardon, I was thinking of something. What did you ask? Do I know the other fellow?"

"Yes, do you know the other fellow? You have been around so much I thought you might know him," said Wide.

"Ye—es, I guess you might say that I know him. I didn't know him until we had him in the cell. He's worse than the other fellow, for he can shoot. I know he can shoot. He's dangerous," and Connors stood looking out on the main thoroughfare of the city, bowing to himself, seeming to see away beyond the buildings which stood on the opposite side of the street.

"You have seen him before?" asked Dick, in a more subdued tone, as he realized that Connors was reminiscent for the nonce.

"Eh, what?" and Connors suddenly looked at Dick, having paid no heed to the quiet question for some seconds. "Oh, yes, yes; I have seen him before. He knows I have seen him before. He—he killed my partner back in Ohio. Escaped one time from jail and got away for more than a month. He killed my partner when he escaped from the cell. He can shoot; shoots well; shoots to kill." Connors stood quiet again, looking again beyond the scene which spread before the window, his hands deep in his pockets. He was studying over something, dreaming of other days. Suddenly he awoke to the present and turned again to Dick:

"Hit me in the left arm, too. Old score I've got to pay, but he's in jail under my protection, and I can't pay it. I owe him one for the mark on my arm. He laid me up for a month with that. Wish I had been on the other side with you. I'd got him sure." Here he relapsed into silence, and Dick took the chance to withdraw, though he inwardly determined to hear the story.

## CHAPTER IX.

### CONNORS TELLS HIS STORY.

"Terry, let's take a walk out to the other end of town and inquire about Lucy," proposed Dick, leaving the station and approaching his chum, who stood awaiting his coming.

"That's a first-class oidea, and Oi wish for you a great many more of that kind. Oi think your think-tank will improve with age."

"And I think your think-tank will never grow any better," quickly replied Young Wide Awake.

"You think it has reached the limit of growth at my age? Oi must be one of them prodigies, thin."

"You may be one of them prodigies—but you're not. Your think-tank won't grow any better with age, because your think-tank would explode if it had more than its present thimbleful of thinks in it."

"And, me dear friend Woide, that cuts you out of a compliment Oi was going to tell you. That cuts it out," replied the Irish lad, acting as if he were keeping back some great state secret.



"By keeping back that compliment you are serving the purpose of enlarging that think-tank of mine."

"Oi fail to see how," spoke Terry.

"Because it won't have to be worrying over swelling up about nothing," smiled Wide in return, and the conversation was changed at the next sentence.

"Did ye see how thot fellow Connors is watching those two fellows we came in with to-day? Oi wonder if he knows them?" asked Terry.

"Too much for me. He told me he knew one of them while we were coming to town on the wagon, and a while ago he said he knew the other one, too. I am going to get him to tell me the whole story. There's a mystery about the fellow that's on the books as Tom Canty. Connors wouldn't talk about him."

"Did he say he knew one of them?" asked Terry quickly. Whereupon Dick launched into the story and told Terry of what Connors had told him during the drive, and how Connors had acted when asked about the other man at the headquarters after the little meeting in the private office.

"Shure, Oi'd loike to know all of thot. It sounds loike it moight be a loikely story," assented Terry to the opinion of Dick.

"Hello, boys!" cried a merry voice from the driveway, as the two boys drew near the Lester home. "Come over this way!"

The boys turned in at the drive and walked toward the gallery upon which they saw a little party gathered.

"What has been going on?" asked Kitty, coming forward. "We just heard that both of you were mixed up in a shooting scrape and that you had captured two murderers at the points of pistols and brought them all the way back to town from south of Norwich. How came you over there?"

Kitty hurried through the questions as rapidly as her tongue could wag.

"First, we'd like to ask how Lucy is getting along, and then how all the rest of you are, after which we'll tell our very thrilling story," smiled Young Wide Awake, as he mounted to the gallery ahead of Terry and shook hands with everyone.

"I am getting along fine, Dick. These people have been treating me as if I were a queen, and they won't even let mamma take me home. She was out here this morning and has been here nearly all day. She left a few minutes ago and Mrs. Lester and Kitty wouldn't let her take me back home."

"Of course not. Can you blame us, Dick?" said Mrs. Lester, just then coming to the porch where the rest were sitting.

"Not a bit of it, Mrs. Lester. I would have done the same if I had been in your place," answered Wide, pleasantly.

"And she has been playing over those pieces we played out at the asylum," said Kitty, enthusiastically.

"And telling us all about what they did out there," said Faith.

"Not to mention the fact that she was glad that she didn't have to stay there," laughingly interpolated Mrs. Lester.

The sun's rays were falling in long slants across the world, and shadows were growing longer, when the boys

arose to make their departure. After much urging they had told the story of the capture of the two criminals, forgetting much of the detail which brought themselves into the limelight. Each was somewhat modest, and if he had done anything deserving of praise on the part of any or all the people he would let any or all the people learn what it was.

"Do you know, Terry, that I'd like to go back to the station and hear the story of Connors, if I only thought he would tell it. I wonder if he is there now," said Dick, as they left the home of the Lesters and started for the business section of the city.

They fell to talking of the two criminals who had been captured during the afternoon, and the peculiar Connors who seemed to know so much of the criminal world, who nearly always knew all the noted robbers and thieves. This had been one of the rare instances when a criminal well known to the police records had come to Belmont, and, since they had so often heard Connors speak of this criminal or that one in terms of acquaintance, it was not surprising that he knew these two fellows.

"I have heard him several times telling stories about one man or another who had been arrested for some big crime in another city, and I have wondered whether Connors really knew those fellows. He is a peculiar man, but he seems to have been all over the country, and knows what he is talking about. I know one time, just a few months ago, when Tyers, of the Amalgamated Hose Company, was here, he and Connors fell to talking over several of the large cities in all parts of the country, and one seemed to know as much about them as the other. That's why I know Connors has been around. One doesn't need to just take his own word for it."

"Shure, Oi have never doubted thot Connors has been all around the country, but what strikes me so queer is thot he should come to Belmont and stay here. He hasn't any kin-folks here and he doesn't go around to make any friends. He just allows anybody who wants to know him to come in and get acquainted. Shure, it's not any of my business, and Oi am not going to worry about him," answered Terry, unconcernedly, though Dick knew well enough that the Irish lad's position in the matter was feigned.

At the police headquarters the boys found that a considerable crowd had gathered during the late afternoon, everyone struck with the malady of inquisitiveness and curiosity. The wild news that the chief had been killed and that two criminals had been brought in desperately wounded after a long running pistol duel with Terry and Dick, in which the two boys, too, had been injured, was soon discredited, and the crowd learned that nothing serious had taken place.

"It seems so queer that news of that kind should spread over the city," said Dick to Larrigan, the city editor of the "Herald," "when there was absolutely no foundation for such things. There wasn't any danger, only for a minute, to any one, and it happened that when the first news could be sent to Belmont everyone was all right. Terry himself telephoned for the police wagons, and I know Terry would tell no such story as this. And then it seems that each person has a different version of the story to tell, and different questions to ask about things that never took place."

"That's the way the world goes, Captain Halstead," re-



plied the city editor, another man who had traveled about the country considerably as a wandering newspaper man. "I have seen many a good story for the newspapers spoiled by the arrival of the principals. When the truth gets out it always knocks a wild story in the head. I am rapidly becoming convinced that there isn't any real romance and adventure in the world at all—that it's all in the imagination of the writers of the newspapers. Every time I pick up a newspaper and read some jolly fine story, I just cut one-half of it off for imagination and one-half of the remaining half for misstatement of facts and exaggeration on the glamoured facts. That's about the way it goes. You can believe about one-fourth of what you see in the big papers about such a story as this one might have been."

"Then you don't believe much in your own profession?" asked Dick of Larrigan, in surprise.

"Yes, I do; but I know that if I had been in a larger city I would never have waited for you and the rest of the party to come in from Norwich. I would just have sailed in and told the story the way it was going the rounds of the streets. I would have told all the rumors, and since I know the roads and byways on the Norwich side of the river I would have put in a little description on my own hook. But in Belmont, where everyone knows everyone else, where the real truth can be scattered in fifteen minutes after the principals come into town, it wouldn't do to get anything but the facts. That's the way it goes. Don't you see that to-morrow's paper will only contain the bare facts and there won't be any very fine reading matter in that?"

Larrigan was plainly disgusted. He wanted to tell a good story in his paper on the morrow.

"I am glad I am not a newspaper man if that's the way they look at these things. I always thought they were trying to get nothing else but the facts to publish in their papers."

Dick soon left Larrigan, who turned up the street to search for more Sunday evening news, and joined the party which had gathered in the office of Chief Sharp. They were telling stories of their exploits in times past, the police telling of catching criminals, the firemen of controlling blazes, and others of their own work.

"One of the cleverest escapes I ever heard of occurred some years ago out in Ohio," Dick heard Connors from his corner starting the very story he was so anxious to hear. "Two fellows, named Jones Burroughs and Tom Canty, had been arrested on a charge of bank robbery. Canty was well known to the police in that section, and enjoyed a reputation which few of the police were glad to tell. It always hurts to tell of the courage and coolness of a criminal when you don't know what minute you are yourself going to be the tester of that courage and coolness. Ever stop to think of the matter that way, chief?" as he addressed his question to Sharp.

"Yes, I have thought of it. I know that it makes me shiver when I think that maybe sometime I'll be the target for some fellow who knows how to shoot. They never forget to tell in their descriptions how dangerous a man is, and it appears to me that this ought to be left out. It does more harm than good."

"That's the way I look at it," continued Connors. "It's the psychological effect which it has upon the average man. Most things are through the imagination, anyway, and

when I think that the other fellow can shoot better than I can or handle his weapon more quickly, I'll tell you right now that it frightens me, and I know that I am not as able to catch that fellow. It hurts. But to continue my story: This fellow Canty had robbed the Farmers' National of just about everything it had. No one ever did know how many he had in his gang, but it was a well-known fact to all the police who had ever handled a case in which Canty was one of the principals, that Canty never operated alone. He never trusted many men, but he always trusted enough to protect him in case of danger. So far as that goes I have long since figured out that Canty must be in a way a coward, else he wouldn't want that extra protection."

"That's a safe bet, Connors, but it won't do to bank on when you know the fellow is in a tight place and can shoot. Any old dog will bite when you get it angry and backed up in a corner." The chief laughed as he spoke, for he found his and Connors' opinions about the same.

"Well, these fellows, Canty and Burroughs, were two hard cases. Canty was winged one day after the robbery just as he was pulling up a river, like these two fellows did to-day. It was a fight in the water, both parties, the chasers and the chased, being in small rowboats. When Canty fell in his boat his partner gave in at the point of Winchesters, and we brought them back to jail. Canty pulled out all right, because he was a tough human being, and seemed to care little for pain or operations or anything else. But he had that plagued reputation for being a dead shot, and all of us lived day and night in fear of his attempting to escape from the cell in which we had him securely barred and locked by three doors.

## CHAPTER X.

### DANGEROUS MEN ESCAPE.

"One day, while everything was quiet, and after the State inspector had been through the place to see that everything was in ship-shape about the jail, these two fellows made an attempt at escape. They had obtained saws from some place, and had fixed the bars on the windows so that they were ready to leave at any time. My partner, a fellow whom I had known for a long time and whom I had been with on many a hard case, was on the day watch. The jail was a good-sized one, for we had harbored quite a few of the biggest criminals of the country in that place. This Canty fellow and Burroughs were in adjoining cells, and they did all their talking in whispers. We never butted in to stop them, thinking they were simply recounting tales of days when they were free to do their nefarious work unhindered and unhampered. It was late in the afternoon when there came a cry from one of the guards in the upper tier of cells that someone was escaping. Grant, my partner, hurried up the steps to see what was the trouble, and I went through the other way so that I could reach the roof, which slanted down at one end and left a place in the rear where it was easy to jump. I had always planned that if any one started to escape this would be my stamping-ground for the fight."

Connors stopped long enough to refill his old black pipe and to light it carefully. This consumed considerable time, and those who sat about the circle listening intently to the



story grew impatient at the fellow's evident waste of good time.

"I heard no other sounds, for I was soon on the outside of the building, and I watched all four directions for the escaped to be going. But he didn't go. All of a sudden I heard a scramble through the hatch at the top and I saw Grant coming through the hole like a shot, with two guns sticking above his head. It was plain that he was on the track of somebody or something.

"What's the trouble?" I yelled to him.

"Two of them going through the window and the outer hall doors are locked!" he yells back at me, and his eyes are bulging out like saucers, as he comes flying straight toward the low end of the roof where I was standing.

"Just then there come shots from inside, and we heard the noise of somebody hitting the ground. The fellows were out and ready for the run! I started up to the high end, thinking that one man was enough to watch the lower side, when out of the shadow of the building these two fellows go flying down the grade toward the river again. The road was lined on both sides with bushes, and it would be easy for them to dodge through. Grant went off that low roof in a hurry, and I wasn't far behind him. I didn't draw my guns, because I have always been afraid to have a gun in my hand until I was ready to use it. But Grant was different. He had a way of tripping and falling around with his guns in his hand so that they wouldn't go off and kill him. Ever carry your gun while you were running when you knew it would be some time before you would shoot, chief?" Connors asked again of the chief.

"I have done it, but they say it's not the best thing on earth to do," he replied.

"That's the way I always felt about it. Well," continuing, "Grant was a good runner, and so was I, for that matter, and we gained on those fellows in short order. Before they had gone two hundred yards down the road we were right behind them. There wasn't over fifty yards difference of daylight between us. Then this fellow Burroughs stops and turns to shoot. He whipped out a gun as long as a twelve-inch cannon and pumped the lead at us. Grant lifted his gun and let go at the same time that I did. I thought he was going to shoot at one and he thought I was going to shoot at the other, but we hadn't any idea which was going to shoot at the other. That was the trouble. It happened that we both fired at the same fellow, and Burroughs fell while the firing was going on. Canty, he jumps away in a big hurry and starts down the road again. Grant was right after him, going past Burroughs like a runaway. We went about another two hundred yards, and then this fellow Canty turns and drags out his gun. We don't know where they got the weapons, and I never did learn. Anyway, he wheels by the side of a big sycamore and lifted that gun. He only fired once, as I remember, but Grant leaped into the air with a yell and fell right in front of me. There was no more shooting from Canty. Before I could do anything, he started away again, and there was nothing to do but go after him. I made a dash, and I guess we went another two hundred yards and had gotten to a clearing, a pretty little green, Canty on one side and me on the other, when he turned to fire again. I dropped on the ground mighty quick so that his bullets would go above and started my gun in action. His first shot struck me in the left arm,

the second struck me just above it, and the third was just below. I don't mean that I know exactly how they came, but he only fired three shots and all of them struck in my arm. I only had two shells in my weapon, but I let him have both of them as best I could. He jumped away from that clearing, and my arm was giving me so much trouble that I couldn't follow. That's the last time I ever saw Canty. He got away clear and the police didn't get him until he reached Chicago. There he was captured while doing a piece of safe-blowing, and served some time in the Illinois pen."

"Do you think this fellow Canty here is the same fellow?" asked Chief Sharp, with some show of apprehension.

"Do I believe he is the same fellow?"

"Yes; you say your man's name was Canty. Maybe this is the same fellow."

"That's just the reason I told the story. He is the same fellow. You have captured two of the biggest criminals in all the history of the country, and the most dangerous ones. This fellow Jerry was for a long time the partner of Burroughs, and so was Canty. Jerry has a record as long as your arm, and Canty's record would require a couple of newspapers to tell it. There are not two thieves in the whole country who are more dangerous than these two fellows. And, as I say, both of them can shoot as straight as ever a bullet could carry. All they want is the smallest bit of a chance."

"They didn't seem to be so good at the game to-day," said the chief. "They had some good chances on both sides of the river, and they did no harm that I know. That fellow Canty went down easy, and Jerry had all sorts of a show to kill the three of us."

"That may be. They may have been 'off their feed,' as they say about horses that don't win races when they have been touted. But, just the same, I wouldn't trust either one of them with a gun if I had to stand at the other end of the shooting-ground."

"Don't you think it would be a good idea to fasten them up better, Sharp, and put some manacles on them?" asked Chief Pelton, of the fire department, who, of course, was much interested.

"I hadn't thought of adding anything to them in the way of weights, because they are disarmed and are behind the best steel bars in this part of the State," replied the chief.

"That's what they were behind when we had them," smiled Connors. "For my own part, I am not afraid that they will get away, even if they are keen rascals, but I don't boast of your steel bars. We had the best in the whole State of Ohio, and we boasted that no one could get away from us without sawing their way through."

"It reminds me of a fire chief that attended the State meeting a few years ago, who said that his men could stand any kind of a test of endurance, and that he had hose that would stand any sort of a pressure in case the demand was made. Well, in about three months, that fellow was struck by the worst fire that ever hit his city, and all because at the critical time the hose broke under an ordinary pressure," said Chief Pelton. "They were not able to make repairs, and hadn't enough hose to take the place of the split sections, and, as a result, they had to call on another city. The fire went on through the night and his firemen began giving out long before even the visitors, with all their ex-



ertions, were even beginning to show their fatigue. No one ever said anything to him about it after that, because it was a touchy point, but we never heard him boast of such things again. It won't do to think too much of anything."

"As I was going to say, chief," resumed Connors, "it would be a fine idea to keep a guard over these fellows until they are safely out of our hands. We are not the ones who are making the charge, for these fellows haven't done anything to us, but we are holding them on some mighty serious charges in other places, and we can't afford to lose them. A guard would only cost some of the fellows a few hours' sleep for a day or two and it might stop a lot of trouble afterwards."

"That's what I'll do, Connors. Much obliged for suggesting the move," replied the chief of police.

Dick thought that Chief Sharp already had the idea in the back of his head, but it was always Sharp's plan to thank any one for a suggestion, whether he had thought of it or not, or whether or not he expected to put the suggestion into force.

"How about your going on as the first guard, or, rather, the guard for the first night?" he asked of Connors, after a moment's reflection.

"That's all right with me. I'll get about three hours of sleep and then will be ready to go on. It wouldn't do to doze for a single minute, for, if those fellows have the idea of breaking out, they will do it the first chance that is offered. They are quick to seize an opportunity."

The evening was growing well along, darkness having fallen by this time, and the men rose to go, first lighting cigars and pipes, reaching about for their hats in the somewhat aimless fashion that men usually follow when they have been together for an entire afternoon.

"Chief! Chief!" came a yell from along the hallway which led to the sergeant's desk in the rear of the station.

The chief leaped for the door and threw it open in a second, glancing out to see what was the trouble.

"Chief! Those fellows have knocked down one of the men in the passage and have gotten out of their cells! We were just handing in their food for the evening! They are escaping!"

Immediately the little party became an excited one. Two of the most desperate characters in the history of police annals were making their escape, having already knocked out one of their opponents! Connors leaped past those who stood between and gained the door at a single bound.

There was not a word uttered by him, but he darted along the hallway like a flash. Instantly the chief was after him, and the others straggled along, though none with the speed and certainty that Connors moved. It was evident, as Dick thought of the matter afterwards, that Connors was the surest about his movements, was the most certain about his ideas—at least, his leading idea was to frustrate the plan of escape.

Bang! Bang! Bang! came the cracks of pistol shots in the direction in which Connors had gone. The chief did not halt for a moment, though the others did. Dick and Terry ducked under the arms of the men who yet stood in the hallway and made for the rear of the jail. On the sergeant's desk lay two guns which he had allowed to lie while he came to inform the chief—informing the chief

while leaving in the open the very weapons that the escapers would need!

Bang! Bang! came two more shots from the rear, and Dick passed the chief in time to see two forms leap out of the window at the rear of the hall, and another lift himself afterward through the same opening. The men had gone from the jail, with but one pursuer—Connors.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DICK BRINGS THEM DOWN.

"The front door!" cried Wide, turning back along the hallway and dashing in the direction indicated to Terry and the chief.

Quickly they reached the exit and went around the building. Below them, following the path which led straight towards the railroad tracks and from there to the river, they saw the two fugitives running, keeping one directly behind the other, thus giving a follower but a single chance to shoot one of them. Dodging here and there, but keeping well behind until he could reach cover, ran Connors, his hands swinging well out from his body, his coat now off. It was evident that he had removed it as he leaped away from the building.

Dick was so much in the rear that he decided he could gain on the fugitives, and gain a place close behind Connors without placing himself in too much danger. So thinking, he soon closed the gap, as he darted straight down the slight incline, Terry following closely, and the chief keeping up as well as he could. As he ran Dick carried one of the sergeant's guns in his right hand, while Terry did the same. They did not heed what Connors had said about carrying their weapons in their pockets until the time for action. Dick was not practiced in pulling a weapon quite so quickly as might be demanded, and he realized instinctively that it would be demanded at any time. Once the fugitives reached the darkness in the vicinity of the railroad yards they would be, in a manner, protected, while their pursuers, who would have to take every chance, would be at their mercy.

"There they go beyond that string of cars!" cried Connors, as the two boys caught up with him.

"Shall we follow?" asked Dick.

"Not for a minute. We'll wait right here and see which way they go. It's a dead-sure thing they won't linger long in town. They'll immediately look for some way to get out, and the chances are they will take to the river if they cannot find a train out."

"There isn't a train moving along the tracks and I don't think there is any scheduled to leave soon," said Wide.

"Then they'll follow the river road until they see a way of crossing. In the meanwhile they are going to do some damage if we dare get too close on their trail. There they go!" as he pointed beyond the yards to the river road, where two men could be seen skulking hastily under the last lights in that direction.

"Come on, we'll make the rifle. They can't do any more than wing us, if we get out of cover."

"They'll try to find cover somewhere along the river and from there get a boat. We'll have to be on the keen watch for them. Suppose you take that way," pointing to the



inner side of the road, "and I'll go by this way. It is probable I'll meet up with them and when the shooting commences you want to close in fast from your side, for it won't last long. Somebody gets the bullets mighty fast—one or the other." Connors moved toward the river at this suggestion and Terry and Dick followed the railway tracks for several hundred yards.

"Dangerous work," said Dick, speaking in a low tone of voice to his comrade as they pursued their way along the ties of the tracks.

"Shure, Oi don't loike it a bit, but Oi guess we'll have to do something. Thot fellow Connors is a brave rascal."

"He's had it trained into him. He's followed them before and he knows that at any minute he is liable to get a bullet. He's always done that kind of work and doesn't fear a bullet any more than you and I fear the ordinary fire," replied Young Wide Awake.

The boys kept their way along the tracks for several hundred yards further, their eyes glued to the river road where they expected at any time they would hear shooting. But not a sound came from that direction. Everything seemed to be serene in that region and along the tracks they again wended their ways, wondering silently what would happen next. They had not long to wait. Of a sudden two forms darted out from one of the low houses along the river-front, leaped up the slight incline to the river road and started in hot haste toward the south. They were going by the same path that the two boys had followed in their stroll during the early afternoon. It was evident that they were better acquainted with that region and preferred to follow it than choose paths they knew not of. It may be that they thought of the ferry landing and hoped that another boat would be waiting there to receive them.

"There they go!" said Dick, quickly, as he pointed to the fleeing men.

"And Connors right after them!" cried Terry, as he spied the form of a man in rapid pursuit. "He'll be shooting at them in a minute!"

The guess was good. Before Dick and Terry could pick up speed enough to carry them to the next road which would lead them across the intervening space between the railroad tracks and the river road the sound of shots began.

Bang! Bang! came the reverberations. Two shots started the fun. Then followed eight or ten more in rapid succession, showing that the men had obtained guns, if they had not them already when they made their dash for liberty from the station.

"Let's cross here!" cried Dick, leaping from the tracks and going across the cinders and rocks of the right-of-way. There were several houses on their side of the river road and several fences, too, all of which stopped their seeing or being seen—as a sort of cover.

Just as they reached the rear of the houses and were picking their way as fast as they could toward the front, there came five or six more pistol shots from a little farther along the road, and the boys knew the party had moved.

"Up that way!" whispered Dick, hoarsely, pointing to the shots, and at the same time urging Terry to move more rapidly. In a moment more the two boys came out on the road, Dick poking his head about one of the long fences to see what was going on. About one hundred yards in front he saw the two fleeing men making their way along the

road, while one man lay in the road, struggling to rise, another moving off after the two fugitives.

"Come on after them!" cried Dick, as he leaped out from behind the fence and started in pursuit. He recognized the form of the pursuer as Connors, and knew that the bravest man of the crowd was still on his feet. Across his mind there came the idea that the chief was the man who was struggling in the road. The robbers had done one man, but not the other. There still was a chance.

Dick sprinted at his best until he had caught up with Connors.

"Almost give out!" breathed the assistant chief, and Dick knew it was almost true. The fellow's breath was coming in hard pants as he ran, though he remained erect and there was no gun in his hand.

"Get after 'em!" he breathed again, and Dick leaped away in a hurry, cutting down the distance between the fugitives and himself in an incredibly short time. Before they had covered another hundred yards he had closed much of the gap.

Suddenly the two men wheeled on the run, and Dick saw the movement quickly enough to dodge to one side so that he would be out of range of the first bullets, and raised his gun to a level hastily. The firing from both sides was commenced at the same time. Dick pulled his trigger four times, and felt a twinge in one shoulder, though, luckily, it was the left. From behind him there came the report of another gun, and then he heard the report of Terry's pistol at his right. The fugitives were having three men against their two, though, as was known from the statements of Connors, the fleeing men were good shots, while only one of the pursuers was in any way a practiced user of a gun.

"After them again!" yelled Connors, as he caught up with Dick. The smoke of battle had cleared off and Dick, moved by the impulse, leaped quickly away after the men, the pain in his shoulder having gone.

Another hundred yards found the pursuers gaining. Dick well in the lead. And again, following the tactics of the hunted, the fleeing men turned quickly to fire. Just as quickly Dick turned to one side, and lifting his gun, he let fly the two remaining shells. The reports of his gun and those of the fleeing men came at the same time. Dick's gun fell from his hand, his right arm hanging limp, and as he fell he thought he saw both men in front of him stagger from their feet.

"You're all right, boy, just stunned by the bullet hitting your gun. Gee! You're a lucky cuss!" came the voice of Connors, who stooped over him as he opened his eyes.

"Did we get them?" were his first words.

"Got them both! You're a peach of a shot! Nobody fired that time but you, and that's why we know you were the fellow who winged them! They're right here, now, disarmed completely, and if you will get up we'll start back with them."

Dick struggled to his feet, his right arm still retaining the feeling of numbness, though there was no pain. He felt of it several times, wondering why there was not more painful sensation, while Connors walked over to where the two men lay, Terry standing beside with his gun pointed at the heads of the robbers and murderers.

"Shure, Oi thought you were done for," smiled Terry, as Dick joined them across the road.



"I thought I was, too. I don't know what did happen. I know I fired at the same time they did, and then I felt everything growing dark, and my arm was suddenly twisted clear off, I thought."

"What shall we do? Shall we wait for others to come or start right back to the city?" asked Dick.

"We'll start right back. Here, you, load your gun with these shells. I think they'll fit, all right," as Connors handed over several shells and Dick dropped them into his weapon, which was now in his pocket, having been placed there by Connors when he lifted the boy to his feet.

"Irish," addressing Terry, "is your gun in prime shape? You have been standing guard over these fellows with an empty gun, if I am not mistaken," and he handed over several shells to Terry, who immediately smiled and placed them in the chambers of his weapon.

"Come on, now, boys, we're on our way to the village lockup and we think we're going to take you in without any trouble. Canty, if you're memory's good you know I've got a score to pay yet. Just make a run and let me pay that score. I haven't forgotten the Ohio affair yet. Please dash off toward the river and I'll wait just long enough to let your body float instead of having the county at the expense of burying you."

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

Before they had proceeded a great distance along the road, for it must be remembered that they had not gone far below the city in the several short dashes, a wagon drove up, and from it leaped several of the officials connected with the police and fire departments. Chief Pelton was one of the first to leap out, followed closely by Fred Parsons and Larry Downes, with Brick Houston bringing up the rear on that side. On the other side of the wagon were Chief Sharp, Hal Norton and Ted Lester.

"Hello, fellows, did you get them?" were the first words of Pelton.

"Yep, we got 'em. Young Wide Awake trimmed them both off at two shots. He can shoot just like a star—straight at any old thing! By ginger, he fetched 'em both a round turn when he got straightened out at them!" answered Connors.

The two men were sullen and silent, and Pelton approached them with manacles, ready to place them.

"Here, you two boys, you keep your guns leveled at them, and I'll put on the bracelets. Stand back, boys," as he addressed the new arrivals, "for they might make a run. Let everything be clear for those guns. If either one of them makes a move just plug him right in the center," and Connors took the manacles from the hand of Pelton and placed them over the wrists of the two captives.

The two men were soon loaded into the wagon, the horses were turned, and the trip started for town.

"How are you feeling, chief?" asked Wide. "I saw you lying in the road, but we couldn't stop then."

"Oh, I'm all right, only one of those rascals got me in the shoulder. They must have been aiming for the shoulder altogether. That last one got me fair, I think, from the way it feels, though it was a little too high to lay me up. A little to the left would have punctured my lungs."

"That reminds me that I had a sting in the shoulder," quickly spoke Wide, and he pulled open his coat and vest. The entire front of his shirt was stained with blood! They were just passing beneath an electric light when he made the exposure, and several of the boys gasped with surprise and wonder as they saw the sight.

"You're hurt, Wide!" cried Hal. "Is there any pain?"

"None just now. I felt a little twinge at first, but I had to keep going. That was before we had cornered them the last time."

"Do you mean to say that you kept on shooting with that wound?" asked Chief Pelton, bending over closely to see the flesh, as Dick bared his skin.

"It just tore through the top," said Dick, himself examining more closely. "It will be all right after the arm is washed. It's more show than hurt. You see——"

Just then there was a sudden movement in the rear of the wagon-bed, and both men leaped out of the wagon at one time. The police and firemen had been so intent on watching the uncovering of Dick's arm that they had not noticed the movement of the two captives.

Bang! spoke a pistol instantly, and both men dropped to the ground, Connors touching the ground almost at the time of the shot. He had lifted his gun on the instant that he saw the movement of the men, and his only shot had taken one of them, surely.

"Got you that time, eh, Canty? I knew you'd fool with me too much. What got into you? Can't you see that those manacles won't come off? How could you get away?"

The only reply was a groan from the injured man, and Connors stooped to see what effect his shot had had.

"Just got him in one side. Maybe the doctor can fix him when we get to town," he said, as he straightened up and the others of the party joined him. "Just lift them back into the wagon and we'll call the doctor after we get to the station. That fellow is in trouble. He wants to get away. I don't blame him, if what I hear is true. Canty, are you guilty of that murder down at Brockport? If you are, I'll tell you right now that you are going to be tried. I've just about made up my mind that I'll take you there myself to-night. You can just make as many attempts to escape as you want. You've got my dander up, now, and I'm going to take you into my own hands. You remember that you've got Connors to deal with, and he don't deal anything else but lead."

Again the start was made for the station, and this time the trip passed without mishap. There was a great crowd on the streets as they passed down Main Street, and a still greater crowd greeted them at the station.

Dick and Terry soon took themselves away from the headquarters and went to the engine-house on Holmes Street. Here gathered all the members of the Washington fire company. They were proud of their two leaders who had captured the two notorious thieves and murderers and they wanted to hear the story.

"Tell us all about it," they begged of the two boys, until, in sheer desperation and self-defense, the two boys related some parts of the story, forgetting many of the details which brought them too well into the story.

"Are they guilty of that murder down at Brockport?" asked Hal.

"Really, I do not know," answered Young Wide Awake.



"It looks like they are guilty of something or they wouldn't want to get away. They made some desperate attempts to decamp and if it hadn't been for the quickness of Connors they would have been away by this time. That man is a wonder; he's the most courageous man I ever saw. He doesn't seem to be at all afraid of a bullet or anything else that man makes and shoots."

"That's about the way he sizes you up," joined Chief Pelton, as he came into the Washington engine-house and overheard the praise of Connors by our hero. "He was just telling the story to the men up at the headquarters, and he says if it had not been for you that they would never have been captured. He says you are the fellow who winged them on the run, and that your gun's deflecting a bullet was the reason why you went to the ground. He says he saw you stagger when you were hit at first, and that you caught your feet at once and started in pursuit as soon as they went on the run."

"Connors is too modest, chief. You know as well as I do that he was the one who leaped out of that room and started down the hallway when no one else was in pursuit. You know that he was away after them a hundred yards before any one else after they went through the window. And you know he took every chance going through the window after them."

"All that is true, Wide, but you were with him all the way, you and Terry. If you two boys had not been along the fellows would have escaped."

When Dick reached home, which was yet early in the night, there was a telephone call awaiting him. It was from Kitty. Dick called her up and had to wait several moments for a reply.

"Is that you, Dick?" she asked. "I heard something about another shooting scrape and that you were in it. Were you hurt, dear?" and she lowered her voice as she pronounced the last word.

"No, I wasn't hurt. There wasn't much of a chance to get hurt. The shooting took place so quickly and it was all over in such a short time that a fellow didn't have much time to get hurt," laughed Dick.

"Just like you to say such a thing. I want to see you tomorrow, and if you don't tell me all about it you will have to pay a fine," she said.

"And if I do have to tell you all about it you will have to pay me something for the trouble."

"What do I have to pay you?" she asked.

"Just the same thing that I will be fined," he laughed. With this she joined in the laugh and hung up the receiver after several words more.

In the morning the case of the two men was called before the chief police judge in the police headquarters, and they were held until later in the day, when it was expected that the authorities at Brockport would send for the men. It was about noon that the two deputies from the sea city came in to the office of the Belmont chief of police and introduced themselves.

Chief Sharp was talking to them when Connors walked in.

"Mr. Connors, this is——"

"Hello, Connors!" cried one of the men, putting out his hand.

"Dunlap, by all that's good!" exclaimed Connors, taking the proffered hand and shaking it heartily. "When did

you come into this section of the country? I'm powerfully glad to see you, old man. Did you come up after these two fellows? Remember them? They're some of the gang that we had back there when Grand was killed." rattled Connors to his old-time friend. "Canty is one of them. You know he was the pard of Burroughs in those days. The other one is Long Jerry, the dangerous rascal who used to give more trouble than all the rest of the gentry put together. We've landed them for you and you can gladly have them. Take 'em with you and may Heaven bless the day that you get rid of them in the pen!"

The little party of men soon became quite congenial, and, since the return train was not due until late afternoon, the two visitors were shown the city, Connors himself doing the honors, while Chief Sharp took up the guard over the prisoners.

News came to Belmont the next day that the jury had found them guilty of the charge of murder and that the two men were bound over to a higher court. Afterwards they were found guilty and sent to the gallows.

Late that afternoon Dick and Terry made the trip to the edge of the city, which Dick had promised, and here he told the greater part of the story to the girls, and in secret was paid the reward for his trouble. It was a glorious day for Dick, in that he did not have to attend school and had a thorough rest before going to the trial. He had to appear as a witness, and he spent the remainder of the morning with his boys at the engine-house going over the apparatus, preparatory to the next run or an inspection from the chief or the fire committee of the council.

"It has been a string of strenuous days, Terry," he commented, as they left the Lester house. "First the trip to Lincoln, then the Pythian fire, then the explosion, then the fire at the asylum, and last, but not least, the chase after those two criminals. I hope we don't stack up against anything like that soon again."

THE END.

"YOUNG WIDE AWAKE IN A SNARE; OR, PUTTING OUT A DOZEN FIRES," is the title of next week's "Wide Awake Weekly." It will be No. 101, and is one of the best stories in the series. Robert Lennox will here tell a story that is thrilling from one end to the other. The title does not give more than the slightest conception of the reality of the stern adventures through which our hero, Dick Halstead, and his boy firemen pass. Read No. 101.

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## CHOICE READING MATTER.

An elephant was crossing a railway line in India when a down ballast train in motion tried to whistle him off the line. He obeyed the whistle, but instantly was on the line again and pushed the engine back with all the strength he could muster, causing the derailment of the engine and one of the trucks. The driver fell off and received some injuries, and the mahout, who had apparently lost all hold over the animal, and had perhaps anticipated the accident, jumped down, but was unhurt. The elephant was only bruised.

Rangoon's latest luxury, the electric tramway, is enjoying extraordinary popularity, and is being put to uses undreamed of in more conventional lands, according to the London Telegraph's Rangoon correspondent. A wealthy Burmese lady having died on April 3, her relatives decided to have her body conveyed to the cemetery by electric tram. Six cars were hired, and with a band playing the "British Grenadiers" the party bowled along at twelve miles an hour the three miles to the cemetery. Rice and flowers were scattered by the funeral party as they proceeded rapidly on their way, to the great delight of the children en route. A Burman never makes a melancholy party at a funeral, but this is the first time in the history of Rangoon that electric cars have been hired for a funeral procession. Now, it seems, the natives are petitioning for a special type of car to meet the demand in this direction.

Herr Bebel, the leader of the German Socialists, who has been so much in evidence of late, is a wheelwright by trade. Although entirely self-educated, he is one of the finest orators and debaters in the Fatherland; and, distasteful as his views may be to the majority of members of the Reichstag, whenever he addresses the Assembly he is certain of having a large and attentive audience. In such esteem is he held by the Socialists that millions will obey his will without thinking whether they are doing right or wrong. Herr Bebel neither drinks nor smokes, and besides being a celebrity in the political world has gained fame as a writer.

A distinguished citizen of the town of Relizane, France, is a stork named Marinette, who goes about with great dignity among her circle of acquaintances upon a wooden leg. Marinette is the property of M. Hilaire Borge, an interne of the hospital of Relizane, and it was natural that the most enlightened care should be hers when she sustained a compound fracture of her left leg. Her master tried first to set the injured member, but after a month the bones had not united, and the wound caused by the splinters had begun to gangrene. The practitioner decided upon a radical operation, namely, disarticulation at the knee. It succeeded perfectly, and fifteen days later the stork was walking on two legs, only one was of wood. Marinette did not seem to be much inconvenienced, and if she did not recover all her former ease of gait she gained in dignity what she lost in suppleness. She made constant progress, too, in the new mode of locomotion, and, always as sociable as before her cruel accident, she runs at a word to her friends. In case of any accident to her artificial leg, M. Borge keeps a second one in reserve, ready to replace the first at a moment's notice. The circumstance is a curious one, but not without precedent, for the Jardin des Plantes in Paris has long had in its menagerie a wading bird with one leg amputated and replaced by a wooden limb.

"They have stopped faro, poker, three-card monte and all open gambling games down on the border," said Col. R. W. Dowe, Collector of Customs at Eagle Pass, Tex., "but the Texas sports, not to be outdone by the law, have invented new ways of taking chances with their coin. One of the latest, much in vogue in El Paso, is this: A couple of men will walk up to the counter of a saloon and each will deposit thereon a cube of white sugar. Then they will stand stolidly before these lumps of saccharine, neither saying a word, but gazing on their respective cubes as though the fate of nations hung in the balance. What is it they are waiting for? Why, the man whose piece of sugar attracts the first fly must give to the other any sum from a dollar up, besides paying for the customary liquids, since the barkeeper must get his toll. It looks curious that such a simple game should become the fashion, but it is all the rage down on the Rio Grande, and even the sheriffs and district-attorneys are among its votaries."

## RIB TICKLERS.

A bad sign: An illegible signature.

The baker thinks it's all right to sponge his living.

"Why so late? I have been here nearly an hour." "I should have been also if my wrap were a last year's pattern."

She—You call me beautiful now, but will you call me beautiful twenty years from now? He—Oh, why picture the dismal side of everything? You may be dead then.

Lytsute—So poor Jones, the toymaker, has gone out of his mind! Stryppes—Yes. He had been busy for three months on a mechanical tramp, and he couldn't get it to work.

Eating in restaurants has driven many a man into matrimony, declares an exchange, and living in boarding-houses and hotels later has driven many a man out of matrimony.

"Newton discovered why the apple fell down, did he not?" "He did." "Well, then, it remains for some equally brilliant mind to discover why it is that plums fall to those higher up."

Teacher—Now, children, I am going to tell you about the prophet Daniel, who, though cast into a den of lions— New Scholar (fresh from New York)—Have you only just got on to that here?

A Cleveland lawyer tells of a man living in a suburb of that city whose sleep had been disturbed nightly by the howling on his own back fence of his neighbors' cats. At last, in despair, he consulted his lawyer. "There sits the cat every night on our fence," explained the unhappy man, "and he yowls and yowls and yowls. Now, I don't want to have any trouble with this neighbor, but the thing has gone far enough, and I want you to suggest a remedy." The lawyer looked solemn and said not a word. "I am well within my rights if I shoot the cat, am I not?" asked the sufferer. "I would hardly say that," replied the legal light. "The cat does not belong to you, as I understand it." "No." "And the fence does?" "Yes." "Then," concluded the lawyer, "I think it safe to say that you have a perfect right to tear down the fence."



## DARING ESCAPE FROM SIBERIA

By Kit Clyde.

Although much has already been written upon the horrors of the Siberian exile system and Russian political prisons in general, authentic facts have hitherto been difficult to obtain, and the revelations have been somewhat disjointed and vague in consequence. Now, however, the accounts of the atrocious treatment of prisoners are fully corroborated by Felix Volkhovsky, a Russian journalist, who, after eleven years of exile, escaped recently from Siberia and has just arrived in London. This escape is the more remarkable as he is the first exile who has accomplished the long and extremely difficult journey to the Pacific, eluded the vigilance of the police, and embarked for England via Japan.

Volkhovsky's story is a romance. He has been committed to prison three times, and, exclusive of his exile, has spent a total of nearly nine years in solitary confinement. The first occasion of his arrest was while completing his studies at Moscow University in 1868. He was suspected of belonging to a dangerous secret society. Without any information of the charge, he was conveyed to St. Petersburg and lodged in the prison of the secret police.

For seven months he was kept there in solitary confinement, a punishment inflicted upon all political exiles who see no person except the warder who brings food once a day. The police eventually decided that no such society existed, and he was therefore released and returned to Moscow. To his disappointment, however, he found that, although he had studied for the law and passed his examinations, the authorities would not grant him his diploma, owing to the suspicion which had rested upon him. Without the diploma he could do nothing, and for a few months he remained in idleness.

Meanwhile Nechaieff, a prominent revolutionist, had formed a conspiracy which, in the following year, was detected. Volkhovsky, who was known to be interested in politics, was at once rearrested with a number of others whom the police accused of being implicated in the plot. He was taken, before Senator Chemadiourov, and after being questioned was kept in solitary confinement in the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul for upwards of three years. The cell was very small, cold and ill lit, but the general accommodation for prisoners was infinitely better than at the present time.

Not until three and a half years after his arrest was he brought to trial at the Sudebnaia Palata. With eighty others he was indicted under the court statutes of Alexander II, which were enforced on that occasion for the first time, although a law was soon afterward passed transferring trials of a special character to an exceptional tribunal consisting of Senators appointed by the Czar.

Dispirited by the solitude, weakened by lack of exercise, and ill through want of proper medical attention, Volkhovsky was unable to stand when in court, and after a trial extending over two months he was once more liberated.

He then journeyed first to Stavropol, in the Caucasus, and thence to Odessa, where he obtained an appointment as chief clerk in the Town Council. Soon, however, he commenced to carry on some propaganda among a circle composed of both educated persons and workmen. The propaganda was not revolutionary but purely theoretical and critical, deploring the existing state of things in Russia and lamenting the lack of a representative body.

This movement Volkhovsky, with several others, carried on secretly, smuggling books from London and Zurich, and being compelled to hold meetings in cellars and other similar places for fear of detection. The police ultimately discovered it, and in 1874 he was arrested for the third time and conveyed to the fortress at St. Petersburg, which he states was far worse than before.

Another three years of solitary confinement in a damp subterranean cell, and then he, with one hundred and ninety-eight other suspects, was tried by the special court of five Senators whom the Czar appointed. Such was the harsh and inhuman treatment to which they were subjected in the for-

tress that five of the accused died during their trial. Subsequently he was convicted of treason and sentenced to exile for life.

A month after being sentenced he commenced the journey to Siberia. This was fraught with but little incident, inasmuch as in the early days of the Terror the Government endeavored to transport prisoners to Asia as speedily as possible, and instead of performing the whole distance on foot, as they do now, exiles were conveyed by train to Nijni Novgorod and thence by barge to Perm, accomplishing the remainder of the journey on horseback.

Being of noble birth, he was not fettered, nobles being exempt by law until they enter the mines, although many are put in chains by special order of the Emperor. Arriving in Siberia after a journey lasting several weeks, Volkhovsky was sent to Tuklinsk, a village in Tobolsk, and after being informed that he must expect a visit from the police at any moment, and that he was forbidden to go beyond the boundary of the village or he would be knouted, he was allowed to seek his living as best he could.

Without money, and with a knowledge only of literature and the law, he remained at this village for five years, earning a scanty livelihood as a house painter and performing odd jobs. The life, however, was terribly degrading; for, besides being visited twice a day by the police, the inhabitants of the village were forbidden to associate with him, and the superintendent of police took an inhuman delight in rendering his life as hard and miserable as possible.

After five years' residence he married, and was eventually fortunate enough to obtain permission to transfer himself to Tomsk. This he did without delay, being compelled to do the journey on foot, accompanied by his wife. Probably the terrible hardships ruined her constitution, for very shortly afterward she died, leaving an infant daughter.

The governor of Tomsk, the exile discovered, had been one of the officials of the Moscow University when he was a student; therefore their relations were friendly, and he had many opportunities of visiting the forwarding prison, about the overcrowding and horrors of which so much has lately been written. It is a hot-bed of filth and typhoid, vice and immorality, engendered by the indiscriminate herding together of both sexes.

For five years the exile lived in Tomsk. Volkhovsky's position was exceptional, for through the governor he obtained a passport enabling him to travel throughout Siberia in search of employment. While residing in the town he earned a living by writing for the one newspaper published there, but as this was shortly afterward suppressed and the governor died, he started for Irkutsk, performing the distance by traveling incessantly for eleven days. Again he devoted himself to literature, but in a short time the police, without stating any reason, ordered him out of the town.

While in Irkutsk he contrived to save about \$150, and with this secreted he eventually traveled on foot in severe weather across the Yablonoi Mountains to Troitskosavsk, a small town on the Chinese frontier. He intended to remain there a year, but after three days he was again expelled, and then for the first time he contemplated escape.

Journeying east continually, and always avoiding the villages, he reached the Pacific coast after a most exhausting and lonely journey extending over two months. His adventures are sufficiently numerous and interesting to fill a volume. On one occasion he met with a very severe *contretemps*, for, having passed Blagovestehensk in safety and completed four-fifths of the distance, he was on a small steamer on the Amoor when it ran aground, the water being too shallow for the vessel. A hundred miles further, near the junction with the Songari, was the Hanka Lake, which he was compelled to cross, but the boats ceased running on the last day of September until the following May.

He had but a little over two days in which to do the journey and catch the last boat, therefore he was compelled to spend nearly the whole of his remaining money in the hire of two horses, which he was fortunate enough to obtain at Khabarovka.

Arriving on the last day, he succeeded in crossing the lake, and then began another journey through the Oussouriskykrai,



which he describes as a beautiful but almost wholly uninhabited country, and lastly entered the little port of Vladivostok. Here he assumed the guise of a trader and took lodgings for several days.

Avoiding the police, who would certainly demand to see his passport, and would at once discover he was an exile, he casually inquired on the quay when the next ship would sail. It chanced to be an English steamer, and with the captain he entered into negotiations, explaining the true state of affairs.

For some time the Englishman was unwilling to take him, but when earnestly appealed to in the name of freedom he consented, with the result that on the day fixed for sailing the exile took his baggage—much of which was artificial—on board.

To his dismay he found that the ship could not start until the following day, and that it was impossible for the captain to secrete him. He therefore had to return to his lodgings at great risk, spending a day and night of anxiety, feeling that the story he told the people with whom he lived was not believed, and fearing they might suspect and give him up to the police.

However, he got safely on board, was secreted, and sailed to Japan, traveling thence to Vancouver in another ship, and after remaining there some time and earning a little money, he continued his travels to Ontario. There he met Mr. Kennan, with whom he was acquainted at Tomsk, who took a great interest in him, and afterward, going direct to London, was warmly welcomed by his compatriots.

His experiences are those which few men have had, because few could outlive them, and the message from the down-trodden land of suffering he delivers with much impressiveness. When he escaped, his little daughter, aged ten, was left behind. The fear that the child might be seized by the Russian Government, as was the case with the children of several political offenders, imposed upon him the necessity of concealing his identity. But now, after much anxiety, the child, who was secretly conveyed out of Siberia in disguise, has joined her father in London.

## PERFORMING ANIMALS

People who go to the circus and see horses, elephants, monkeys and the like perform wonderful tricks must often ask themselves how the animals are taught to do them. A writer having interviewed several circus celebrities undertakes to satisfy their curiosity. M. Loyal, who has been ringmaster of the leading Paris circus for thirty-two years, supplies interesting information concerning horses.

"The horse," he says, contrary to general belief, "is the most stupid animal on earth. He has only one faculty, memory. You must teach him his exercises with the cavesson and the long whip.

"Having forced them into his head, you must use the short whip when he resists, and give him a carrot when he obeys. Whips and carrots form the great secret of the trainer.

"The horse must be from five to seven years old; before that age he is too spirited; after it his muscles are not elastic enough.

"The first thing to do is to accustom your horse to the ring, to make him run round regularly and then stop at a given signal. To accomplish this the animal is brought into the ring. The trainer holds in his left hand the tether, which is passed into the cavesson, a kind of iron crescent armed with sharp points fixed on the nose of the horse; in his right hand he holds the long whip. Behind the animal an assistant with a stout, short whip is posted.

"The trainer calls on the horse to start, and, pulling his tether and smacking his long whip, forces him to gallop round. If he refuses, the assistant uses his whip also; if he is obedient he is rewarded with a carrot.

"To make him stop short, the trainer cracks his long whip again, while the assistant, with his short whip, throws himself suddenly in front of the animal and the result is obtained."

M. Loyal tells us that "the horse has a great objection to kneeling or lying down at any moment. This feat is taught by means of iron bracelets placed on his ankles and attached to a tether held by the trainer, who by sudden jerks or pulls as he is moving makes him fall or kneel.

"The animal remembers the lessons, and by dint of whip and carrot ultimately performs them at the mere command of the trainer. The horse is taught to dance to music in the same way with the foot bracelets."

As regards the learned horse, who opens boxes and takes things out of them, here is how the animal is trained to do it:

"I first get a carrot," says M. Loyal. "I place it in a box. I then lead the horse to the box. He smells the carrot, lifts up the lid of the box with his nose and takes out the vegetable, which he is allowed to eat.

"The next day, before setting the horse free, I show him a handkerchief full of bran. He takes it and tries to eat it. I then let him loose. He runs to the box; but, by bitter deception, it is empty. The day after I resume the exercise, but this time the horse finds the handkerchief with the bran in the box. He takes it out, and I reward him with a carrot. I decrease the amount of bran in the handkerchief every day, until, in the end, I put merely the handkerchief in the box. The horse brings it to me and gets his carrot. I then reduce the size of the carrot every day, until at last I give him nothing. The horse continues to perform with the handkerchief in the hope of getting the carrot."

With respect to dogs, M. Changeux, who is now exhibiting a troupe of them at the Nouveau Arque, says their education is a work of time and patience. Sometimes it takes two years.

"I use neither sugar nor whip," he informs us. "I take my dog in my hands, talk to him, and try to make him understand what he is to do. I perform the trick myself, and the dogs follow and imitate me."

At present he is showing a carriage dog which performs on the single wire.

"I will tell you how I taught him to become an equilibrist. I made him first of all walk on a plank, which was balanced to and fro. The plank was gradually reduced in width every day, and the movement accelerated. At length the plank dwindled down to a narrow slip; this was replaced by a long round stick, and ultimately he found himself on the single wire."

Strange to say, this dog is blind. M. Changeux says scent is the great quality which enables dogs to perform some tricks. For example, the poodles who play at dominoes are taught by their scent. Their trainer touches the dominoes which the dog has to play, and the animal smelling them picks them out from the rest and plays them.

The pig is said to be the most difficult animal to train. Tony Grice, the clown, does not believe in learned pigs. They are to be taught only by their weak point—their gluttony.

"When I have got my young pig," he says, "I begin on the principle that I shall obtain nothing from him without satisfying his appetite. I feed him myself and during a few days I vary his food in order to find out what he likes best. As soon as I have discovered his favorite dish I deprive him of it completely. This dish is my great talisman.

"The chief pig I am now performing with prefers beef fat. I put a piece in my pocket. I jump over hurdles and the pig follows me, doing likewise. In this way he learns his exercises and gets his fat. I decrease the piece of fat every day and at last I give him nothing. Should he refuse to work I thrash him till he does, and, having completed his performance, I recompense him with his favorite meal."

The elephant, on the contrary, is very intelligent, and his education would be easy but for his cumbersome weight, which forces the trainer to have recourse to cruel means. For instance, to make him raise and hold out his foot, an iron ring with sharp points is placed on it, and, being drawn by a rope, the points enter the flesh.

The elephant, feeling the pain, lifts up his foot and keeps it in the air until the pain ceases. After a few repetitions he remembers the pain, and at the sight of the iron raises his foot. His instruction, thanks to his intelligence, is soon completed. Some elephants are taught in less than a fortnight to play on a drum, work a tricycle and beg on their hind legs.



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